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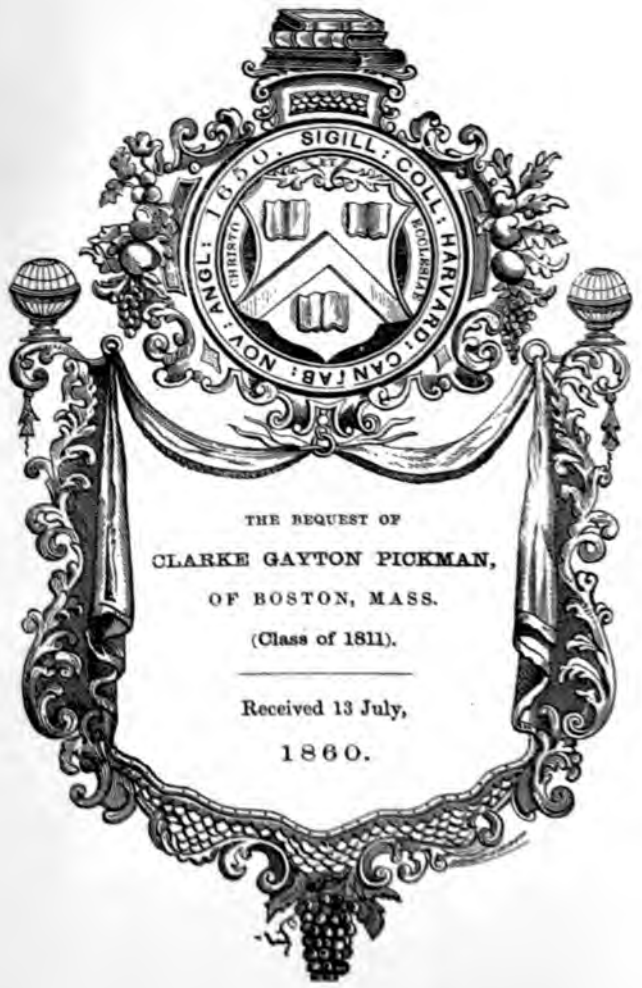

THE BEQUEST OF

CLARKE GAYTON PICKMAN,

OF BOSTON, MASS.

(Class of 1811).

Received 13 July,

1860.

Engraved by E. Scriven

Hannah More

From a Drawing by Miss Simmons after a Picture presented to her by Mr. More, Painted by Miss Reynolds. Sister of the late President of the Royal Academy

Published June 4 1838 by T. Cadell Strand London.

THE

WORKS

OF

HANNAH MORE.

A NEW EDITION,

WITH ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS,

IN TWELVE VOLUMES.

VOL. XII.

LIFE.

LONDON:
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1838.

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LONDON:
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TO

HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY,

VICTORIA,

BY THE GRACE OF GOD,

OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,

QUEEN,

DEFENDER OF THE FAITH,

&c. &c. &c.

MADAM,

THE gracious and condescending permission which Your Majesty has granted me to prefix your name to this Volume, seems to require, while it encourages, an explanation of the circumstances which induced me to solicit so exalted an honour.

As one of the most distinguished ornaments of her sex, the memory of Hannah More, I felt, could no where be more appropriately cherished than in the heart of Your Majesty; as the steady supporter and zealous

maintainer of the throne, the record of her loyalty might hope to repose in its shadow; as the eloquent advocate and diligent propagator of the Protestant Faith held by the Church established in these realms, to none could the narrative of her life look so hopefully for countenance as to the Defender of that Faith, and the temporal Head of that Church. While the history of one who was the approved and accepted monitress of youthful Royalty, might hope, however humbly and respectfully, to win from Your Majesty one favourable regard.

That Your Majesty may long and happily live to cherish, guard, and govern those sacred institutions, and to protect that holy religion, of which Hannah More was through life the advocate and defender, is the fervent prayer of,

MADAM,
Your Majesty's most loyal subject,
and most obedient
and grateful servant,
HENRY THOMPSON.

PREFACE.

THE following pages have been written at the suggestion of several of Mrs. More's earliest and most valued friends, who wished themselves and the publick to possess, collected in the compass of one small volume, such particulars concerning her as were treasured in numerous living memories, and dispersed in various collections of private correspondence ;—sources becoming daily less accessible. From his local situation, and external facilities, the writer was thought to possess advantages for the task, which others, however better qualified in other respects, could not equally command. Though himself unacquainted with Mrs. More until after her retirement to Clifton, (having come to reside at Wrington about six months after her departure from Barley Wood,) he could not become the minister of a parish in which she had resided nearly half a century,

without constantly associating with many who had long known her intimately; and, in the course of his ten years' ministry in that parish, he has also become well acquainted with several more of the same privileged class in Bath, Bristol, and Clifton. The information supplied by these unexceptionable witnesses was represented as an ample nucleus to which it might be reasonably expected that intelligence from more distant quarters might be gathered. Nor was the "relligio loci" altogether to be disregarded. Insensate indeed must be the heart which could encounter daily, and almost hourly, some memorial of the greatness and goodness of a human mind, and yet feel no interest in its history. In almost all the neighbouring parishes there exist schools or clubs, instituted or suggested by Hannah More. Her tributary verses call the visitor of many a surrounding village church to be wise, and meditate his end; and in Wrington, every spot is her footstep. The walls which rose beneath her eye, and within which she meditated in solitude the writings which are the property of an admiring world, or held

immediate and familiar intercourse with the greatest spirits of her generation; the trees planted by her hand; the scenes arranged and embellished by her taste; the memorials erected beneath her care; the frequent Bible, Prayer-book, or other religious work, found on the peasant's shelf, bearing his name in her writing, "from Hannah More;" these, or some of these, are the objects which meet the minister of Wrington in his daily walk; while the same association, elevated in accordance with the day, pervades his sabbath duties. It was in the church of Wrington that Hannah More, for many sabbaths, mingled her prayers with those of most of the present congregation; it was here that, in presence of her lifeless remains, the Church proclaimed, in St. Paul's own words, "Jesus and the resurrection;" it is here that her virtues are recorded in needless but honourable marble; and, at the distance of a few yards, her mortal part awaits immortality. To meditate the life of Hannah More, and to find pleasure in the meditation, seems no more than natural on ground so redolent of her memory.

Induced by the possession of these advantages, the writer has endeavoured to use them faithfully. That he entertains a very high admiration for the character of Hannah More, he has no where concealed; but his object has not been to write a panegyrick, but a fair and accurate record of facts. Should it seem otherwise to any reader, it should be remembered that several of those who knew Mrs. More best, and who had witnessed her conduct under severe trials, attested that they never had seen so near an approach to perfection. Nothing is here mentioned without authority; and though it is by no means asserted that every minute statement is rigidly correct, the writer, notwithstanding, hopes that such will be found to be the case. The indication of any error he will gratefully receive, and, should another edition be called for, correction shall be given.

The materials are principally derived from two sources: private letters and living memories. The writer takes this opportunity of returning his most grateful thanks to the kind friends who have so liberally supplied him.

To the family of the late Mr. Cadell, he is indebted for the loan of upwards of one hundred and sixty letters of Mrs. More, comprising nearly the whole of her correspondence with her publishers, and throwing much light on the history of her publications.

To R. Lovell Gwatkin, Esq., one of the very earliest friends of Mrs. More, he is indebted for the loan of upwards of eighty letters written by her and her sisters, and by some friends of the family; for several original pieces; and for copious memoranda, written, while at Barley Wood, by Mr. Gwatkin and his daughter. These papers supply information connected with every part of Mrs. More's life, and, both in extent and importance, are a most valuable accession to the work.

To Mrs. Simmons, widow of the late Capt. Simmons, and one of Mrs. More's *pupils*, and most intimate friends, the writer is indebted for much oral information; to her sister, Miss Lintorn, for the communication of several letters; to her daughter, Miss Simmons, for the drawings which

supply the frontispiece and one of the embellishments, as well as for information on several points; and to her son, John Lintorn Simmons, Esq., Mrs. More's executor, for the list of her bequests.

To Mrs. Freeman, of Becket House, Northampton, also a pupil of Mrs. More, the writer is obliged for much miscellaneous information.

The Rev. Hill Dawe Wickham, M. A., of Frome, very obligingly contributed upwards of ninety original letters of Hannah More and her sisters; and his sister, Mrs. Col. Fawcett, of Mendip Lodge, most kindly examined great numbers of others, and selected such as proved useful.

Haviland John Addington, Esq., of Langford Court, and his sister, Miss Addington, very obligingly communicated nearly 100 letters addressed by Mrs. More to their late father, the Right Hon. J. H. Addington.

To W. Upcott, Esq., of Islington, the writer is indebted for the permission to search his vast collection (perhaps unrivalled by that of any private individual) of materials for recent and contemporary biography.

Mr. Upcott has also very obligingly communicated several papers bearing on the subject.

To Samuel Baker, Esq., of Aldwick Court, to Colonel Daubeney, K.G.V., and to the Rev. Thomas Hartwell Horne, B.D., F.S.A. the writer gratefully acknowledges the loan of several scarce and useful books illustrative of this biography.

George Gibbs, Esq., of Belmont, and William Henry Harford, Esq., of Barley Wood, very obligingly permitted the writer to make the several sketches in their grounds from which the corresponding illustrations are taken; and he is indebted to the kindness of Col. Fawcett, of Mendip Lodge, for a like permission to G. Douglas Thompson, Esq., to whose pencil he owes the illustration at the head of the Fourth Chapter.

To the Bristol Philosophical Institution he is indebted for permission to sketch the inkstand presented by Garrick to Mrs. More; and both to that establishment and to the Bristol City Library he most gratefully acknowledges his obligation for their handsome and unreserved disclosure of their literary stores to his inspection.

Mrs. Randolph, of Bath, and Mrs. James, of Wrington, both intimate friends of Mrs. More, have very obligingly examined great part of the manuscript, and attested its accuracy.

For various oral communications, letters, and papers used in this work, the author returns his grateful thanks to Lord Teignmouth ; William Gray, .Esq. ; Mrs. Woodward ; J. S. Harford, Esq., of Blaise Castle ; the Rev. John Boak, M. A., prebendary of Peterborough ; the Rev. Thomas Brockman, M. A., rector of St. Clement's, Sandwich ; the Rev. Charles Forster, B. D., perpetual curate of Ash next Sandwich ; Mr. Tyson, of Bristol ; Mrs. Whalley (relict of the late Rev. R. C. Whalley) ; Miss Frowd ; and several others, whose contributions are far from being the least valuable, but who will not, the author regrets, permit him the satisfaction of a publick acknowledgment.

If the writer has possessed such advantages as might seem to justify him in acceding to the wishes of his friends and to his own inclinations, he has also experienced

some inconveniences, for the results of which he hopes he may obtain indulgence. Distance from the press and from larger libraries, and impossibility, from a similar cause, of oral communication with many of Mrs. More's friends, have, doubtless, operated to render his volume inevitably inferior to what it might have proved under circumstances more favourable in these respects.

To conclude: as the writer is anxious that his book, though small, should be what it professes to be, a *Life* of Hannah More, omitting no circumstance of real importance or interest, he will feel most grateful for the communication of any *well-authenticated* additional facts, in case the publick should be disposed to call for another edition.

H. T.

Rectory, Wrington,
13th June 1838.

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* The Engravings on Wood are executed by Messrs. Whitehead and Co.

THE BLEEDING ROCK, BELMONT.

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. *Prov.* xxxi. 29.

Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it. *Ibid.* xxii. 6.

CHAPTER I.

In whatever sense the appellation GREAT can be legitimately applied to any human being, history perhaps will not furnish one name more truly deserving the appendage than hers who is the subject of these pages. Does the name belong to *those who have raised themselves from obscurity to eminence?* Behold the daughter of an humble schoolmaster elevated by her own industry and

merit to be the favourite and caressed associate of all that was distinguished in contemporary rank and literature! May the title be earned by *the abstract importance of achievements?* We claim it for her whose ambition was contented with no lower object than the amelioration of human hearts, and the salvation of human souls. Is it conferred by *the extent of operations?* The benefactions of Hannah More were limited to no class, to no country; and, in respect of time, extended over the period of half a century; and her writings will continue to exercise a wide and deep influence on mankind to latest generations. They have already effected a moral revolution, not merely on the surface, but in the inmost vitals of aristocratick and middle life. They were extensively influential in calming the passions and correcting the delusions of a misguided populace in times of turbulence and discontent; and from them many a cottage still continues to derive a little treasure of religious knowledge, piety, and economy. They are read in almost every language of the globe, from the shores of the Arctick Ocean to those of the Indian, and from the Mississippi to the Ganges.[1] Her *personal* exertions altogether changed the moral conduct of the labouring classes within

[1] "Cœlebs" was translated into the Icelandick, "Practical Piety" into the Icelandick and Persian, and the "Sacred Dramas" and "Feast of Freedom" into the Cingalese. Large impressions of all her works have been sold in America. Other translations will be occasionally noticed. Most of Hannah More's writings have appeared in all European languages possessing a literature.

their influence, and abated, if not annihilated, by experimental demonstration, the popular prejudice against the religious education of the poor. May greatness be measured by *the disproportion of physical powers to results?* These mighty consequences were wrought out by a female; a female too of peculiarly delicate constitution, and rarely experiencing immunity from actual disease.[1] Is greatness discovered, not in the resignation of things which we profess to despise, but in *the calm surrender of all that taste and inclination would retain, and the voluntary encounter of all that revolts them, for the accomplishment of some great and worthy object?* Hannah More sacrificed every variety of personal gratification to the object she kept in view. If we would not allow her indifferent to admiration, of which no woman ever received a greater share, and certainly none more deservedly, we must yet

[1] How truly Hannah More could have appropriated the expression of Pope, "that long disease, my life," can only be estimated by those who were privileged with her intimacy for any length of time, and by those who, like the writer, have examined a voluminous correspondence of herself and sisters, which continually refers to such a state of health as would have been considered by most persons a reasonable excuse for total inaction. Not only general derangements of the system, but paroxysms of the severest pain, are adverted to in letters which contain the details of some of her greatest intellectual and corporeal exertions. She stated to a friend in 1819, that she had suffered under "more than twenty mortal disorders." It may be, perhaps, more acceptable to the reader to state this fact generally, than to multiply quotations from letters which could only give him the same information; although some instances will necessarily occur in the course of the narrative.

allow that she withdrew, of her own accord, from its luscious atmosphere to the rude climate of misconception and obloquy. But, indeed, she did much more. She retired from circles in whose converse she delighted, and from friends whose society was the balm of her life, — from the solemn and exalted companionship too of the immortal departed, whose communion none enjoyed with intenser ardour, — and she engaged in intercourse with spirits from whose contact her nature revolted, from whom she could only expect opposition and persecution; she endured personal labour, exhaustion, and indignity; and all this in pursuance of the noblest end ever contemplated by the most insatiate ambition; — the everlasting welfare of mankind. Above all, does true greatness consist, as the Scripture expressly affirms, in *pursuit of the glory of God?* Must the wisdom of the sage, the wealth of the rich, and the power of the mighty, yield their glory to him who glorieth in the Lord?[1] Then was Hannah More great: for she had wisdom, riches, and power; — power of the most effectual and influential kind; — and she laid all these unreservedly on the altar of her God, and at the feet of her Saviour. Her aims were eternal and universal. — A woman, she surrendered admiration; a valetudinarian, she sacrificed personal ease; a friend, she resigned the endearments of friendship; a scholar, she relinquished

[1] See Jer. ix. 23, 24.; 1 Cor. i. 31.; and 2 Cor. x. 17.

THE FREE-SCHOOL, FISHPONDS, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

the pleasures of literature; — that she might "turn many to righteousness." Such qualifications will constitute the most valid title to greatness, when the "mighty hunters" of the earth,

"From Macedonia's madman to the Swede,"

must bring their claims to another tribunal than the superficial opinion of a misjudging world.

HANNAH MORE was born at the hamlet of Fishponds, in the parish of Stapleton, Gloucestershire, about four miles from Bristol, on the 2d of February 1745. Her father, Mr. Jacob More, was born at Thorpe Hall, Harleston, Norfolk, to expectations of high respectability, being regarded as heir to a mansion and estates at Wenhaston in Suffolk. He was accordingly educated at the Grammar School of Norwich, of which Dr. Clarke, brother of the celebrated Dr. Samuel Clarke, was then head master. The inheritance was, however, contested at law by a cousin, whose suit proved successful, and Mr. More was thus sent forth into the world to procure a subsistence by his own exertions. He set out in life as supervisor of excise in Bristol; but being, as his distinguished daughter simply, but expressively, describes him, "a man of piety and learning,"[1] he soon interested Lord Bottetourt in his favour, and was, by that nobleman's influence, established in the mastership of the Free School at Fishponds.

[1] Statement furnished by Mrs. More to the publishers of "The British Gallery of Contemporary Portraits."

Shortly after his settlement in Gloucestershire Mr. More married Mary, daughter of Mr. John Grace, an humble but most respectable and religious farmer; by whom he had five daughters,—Mary, Sarah, Elisabeth, HANNAH, and Martha.

The fourth of these gave early indication of intellectual power. When her mother began to teach her reading, it appeared that observation had already enabled the infant Hannah to acquire some proficiency in the art; and, when she was about four years old, she had actually composed a satirical *poem* on Bristol, descriptive of the Bristol road, beside which her father's house was situate. Two verses are yet in the recollection of her early friends, and they are, it is to be feared, all that time has spared of a trifle so curious and interesting. They are as follow:

> "This road leads to a great city,
> Which is more populous than witty."

At the same age she received from the clergyman of the parish the first sixpence of which she was mistress, for repeating her catechism in church with perfect accuracy. Her love of literature continued to manifest itself, not only in perusing with great avidity the books which her father's slender library supplied, but in the composition of poems, essays, and imaginary correspondence. At eight years old she received her first lessons in Latin; her father being desirous not only to cultivate the fine abilities of his child, but also to qualify her, together with her sisters, for the management of a ladies' school upon principles more

befitting the requirements of responsible and reasonable beings than those which generally obtained in such establishments at that time; where girls

> " Bred only and completed to the taste
> Of lustful appetence, to sing, to dance,
> To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye," [1]

were trained, however paradoxical the assertion may seem, not *to be wives*, but *to get husbands;* to attract the admiration of the wealthy, rather than fix the affection of the good; to run, like comets, the eccentrick orbit of dissipation, rather than to rest, as warming and cheering suns, the centre of the tranquil and orderly domestick system. In perfect accordance with such views, every acquisition that implied *a mind* was then supposed to be essentially masculine; the Latin language itself, necessary as it is to a critical understanding of our own, and to a liberal and intelligent study of our native literature, was held to be so constitutionally male, that a lady who had boldness enough to attempt the acquisition was, in public opinion, tantamount to a Camilla or a Clorinda. By a strange inconsistency, intellectual pursuits were denounced as incapacitating woman for domestick duties, while the whole bent of female education lay towards adapting her for every place but home.[2] Even

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[1] Paradise Lost, xi. 574.

[2] This contradictory practice is admirably satirized in " Cœlebs," where the hero, finding the domestick arrangements of a widower friend very ill managed, concludes that his daughters must be mistresses of Latin, and that so much negligence may even imply Greek! But in asking the eldest her opinion of Virgil, he finds

spiritual acquirements were regarded too exclusively the heritage of man to be invaded by the feebler sex. A practical Mohammedanism prevailed; women were educated as destitute of minds and souls, and if destined for another existence at all, as only to figure there in the character of Houris. Mr. More, like many other sensible men, had not energy enough to disclaim opinions which few dreamed of questioning; and accordingly he was not without a considerable horror of *learned ladies.* But his good sense and parental feeling corrected his practice. Accordingly he educated the *minds* of all his daughters; and as Hannah's talents were manifestly of superior order, he did not scruple to combine with the study of Latin some elementary instruction in the mathematicks; a fact which her readers might very naturally infer from the clear and logical cast of her argumentative writings.

It is not unlikely that a reminiscence of this valuable parent supplied some features to her "Mr. Stanley," the father of Lucilla in "Cœlebs." In the xxxix.th chapter, which is altogether occu-

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her reading limited to "Tears of Sensibility," "Rosa Matilda," "Sympathy of Souls," "Too Civil by Half," "The Sorrows of Werter," and "The Orphans of Snowdon;" while the sister is only acquainted with "Perfidy Punished," "Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy," "The Fortunate Footman," and "The Illustrious Chambermaid." "I rose from the table," says Cœlebs, "with a full conviction that it is very possible for a woman to be totally ignorant of the ordinary but indispensable duties of common life, without knowing one word of Latin; and that her being a bad companion is no infallible proof of her being a good economist."

pied in the discussion of female education, and which well repays a studious perusal, Mr. Stanley says, "I am a gardener, you know, and accustomed to study the genius of the soil before I plant. Most of my daughters, like the daughters of other men, have some one talent, or at least propensity; for parents are apt to mistake inclination for genius. This propensity I endeavour to find out, and to cultivate. But if I find the natural bias very strong, and not very safe, I then labour to counteract instead of encouraging the tendency, and try to give it a fresh direction. Lucilla having a strong bent to what relates to intellectual taste, I have read over with her the most unexceptionable parts of a few of the best Roman classicks. She began at nine years old; for I have remarked that it is not learning much, but learning late, which makes pedants. Phœbe, who has a superabundance of vivacity, I have in some measure tamed, by making her not only a complete mistress of arithmetick, but by giving her a tincture of mathematicks."

The mental constitution of Hannah More combined those of Lucilla and Phœbe, and Mr. More, in consequence, combined the two departments of learning. His efforts for the benefit of his children, and of those who might afterwards be committed to their trust, were blessed incalculably beyond his warmest expectations. In 1757, the eldest Miss More, then in her twentieth year, under the patronage of numerous friends, opened, in conjunction with her sisters, a boarding-school in Trinity

Street, Bristol. The superior character of the religious and mental education afforded in this establishment soon obtained for it a very high reputation, which the expanding abilities of Hannah contributed not a little to enhance. It became *fashionable;* and schools of similar constitution began to multiply. And if to this we add the influential writings of Hannah More on female education, it may be no exaggeration to assert that the great moral revolution which has taken place in this important province is largely attributable to the judgment and diligence of *one* pious and affectionate father in humble life. The record of such instances would still be valuable, if it only tended to eradicate that pernicious "voluntary humility," which is the mere refuge of indolence, — the pretext for inaction drawn from obscurity of station or meanness of ability. No man has a right to say he can do nothing for the benefit of mankind; who are less benefited by ambitious projects than by the sober fulfilment of each man's proper duties. By doing the proper duty in the proper place, a man may make the world his debtor. The results of "patient continuance in well doing" are never to be measured by the weakness of the instrument, but by the omnipotence of Him who blesses the sincere efforts of obedient faith alike in the prince and in the cottager.

When Hannah had completed her twelfth year, she was tolerably conversant with French. This accomplishment she had acquired from her eldest sister, who had used to go thrice a week into

Bristol to take lessons in the language, and instruct her sisters afterwards. So diligently did the eldest Miss More labour in this endeavour, that she spoke the French language with the fluency of a native; and she has been known even to faint beneath the exertion of her day. One of the state prisons, during the war, being at Stapleton, Mr. More occasionally received at his house the French officers on parole. On these occasions Hannah was the general medium of communication. She derived from the masters of the school an acquaintance with the rudiments of Spanish and Italian, in which she afterwards made critical proficiency.[1] Her talents soon attracted the attention of various distinguished literary persons; among whom were Dr. Sir James Stonhouse[2], Dr. Tucker, Dean of Gloucester, (from whose tracts many hints are borrowed in "The Wealth

[1] A translation from the former of these languages will be found in the Appendix (I.) She also translated a Spanish poem, called "Las Lagrimas de San Pedro."

[2] This gentleman and his lady were among her most intimate early friends and patrons. Sir James, at a very early period of her life, predicted the triumphs of her genius. He was for some time physician to the General Infirmary at Northampton, and his writings for the spiritual benefit of the sick are well known from their circulation through the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. He afterwards took holy orders, when he was presented to the rectory of Great and Little Cheverel, Wilts. He removed to Bristol for the benefit of his health, which a visit to the waters had greatly improved. His piety was equally fervent and sober, and his judgment was of great use to his gifted friend in her selection and estimate of religious and theological works. Some verses of Hannah to him, hitherto unpublished, will be found in Appendix (II.)

of Nations,") Ferguson the astronomer, Dr. Woodward, a physician of high repute in Bristol, and Mr. J. Peach, a man of extensive reading and correct taste.

But on none had the acquirements of the youthful scholar made a stronger impression, and to none was the school more indebted for celebrity and patronage, than to Mrs. Gwatkin [1], a lady of considerable influence and fortune in Bristol. To evince her grateful sense of this lady's kindness, Hannah, in her seventeenth year, composed the pastoral drama of "The Search after Happiness." Among other constituents of female education in those times, "plays, and those not always of the purest kind, were acted by young ladies at boarding-schools." [2] In the spirit of one whose riper years were destined to the purification and advancement of female instruction in its graver departments, our youthful heroine appropriately began with that which most closely verges upon recreation. As "The Search after Happiness" was to be performed by ladies exclusively, the characters are all female: but this circumstance detracts little from the effect of the piece, which is rather moral than dramatick: while, as the work of a girl of seventeen, the literary merits of this trifle are astonishing. It is interesting to observe its author "qualis ab incepto processerit." Religion is the soul of this little drama. Vanities and

[1] See Appendix (III.)

[2] Preface to "The Search after Happiness."

amusements, literary pleasures, the indulgence of romantick sensibilities, and the torpor of mental indolence, are here severally pursued as the path to happiness; and all found devious. Religion alone is exhibited as infallibly conducting to the desired object; and the poem concludes with those noble verses,—

> " Fountain of Being, teach us to devote
> To thee each purpose, action, word, and thought!
> Thy grace our hope, thy love our only boast,
> Be all distinctions in the Christian lost!
> Be this in every state our wish alone:
> Almighty, Wise, and Good! Thy will be done."

Shortly after the composition of this poem, the sisters had prospered sufficiently to enable them to build a house on a more extensive scale, which was the first erected in Park Street, Bristol. The order and management of the establishment, together with the superior quality of the education afforded, rendered this school the most celebrated of its kind in the kingdom. It comprised upwards of sixty pupils; and twice the number might have been easily entered, had the accommodations admitted. The Land's End, and the Highlands of Scotland, contributed at once to its supply. It is pleasing to record the filial gratitude of the sisters. They now took a house and garden for their excellent father at Stony Hill, Bristol, and kept two female servants to attend on him. Their substance, thus dedicated, was blessed and increased. The school advanced in reputation, and patrons multiplied. Hannah's talents were known, not

only through the commendations of friends, but especially through the celebrity of "The Search after Happiness," of which many transcripts had got abroad.

In 1763, the elder Mr. Sheridan was at Bristol, delivering his lectures on oratory; when Hannah evinced her delight at the first of these by addressing the lecturer in the following extemporaneous verses:—

"If musick's charms can 'soothe the savage breast,'
And lull the busy cares of grief to rest;
If magick numbers, if the Muse's art
Can please the raptur'd sense, and reach the heart,—
What nobler charms in eloquence are found,
Where wit with musick, sense unites with sound!
Oh could my unfledg'd muse the theme define,
The well-earn'd praise, O Sheridan, were thine!
'Tis thine to harmonize the ruffled soul,
To raise the mourning, and the gay control.
Not the dry precepts of unnatural rules;
Not the dull pedantry of modern schools;
But ev'ry grace that precept ever taught,
By fair example to perfection brought.
Polite as praise, as honest satire keen,
As beauty graceful, and as truth serene;
Correct as science, elegant as wit,
As reason powerful, and as fancy sweet.
No inharmonious cadence gives offence,
But ev'ry varied sound conveys the varied sense.
How every ear upon his accents hung,
When sacred[1] truths flow'd graceful from his tongue!
When Philip's son, roused by the poet's lyre,
With generous transport caught the martial fire,
Th'infectious warmth could gentlest souls engage,
And every mind partakes the warrior's rage:

[1] Alluding to the Scripture pieces which he read.

But when the scenes are chang'd to soft distress,
And gentler themes demand a gentler dress,
Contagious softness roughest breasts could move,
And flinty souls are melted into love.
The book-learn'd parson, and book-keeping cit,[1]
With senseless gravity, and saucy wit,
By impulse irresistible attend,
And little wits their sour attention lend;
With sparing thrift bestow their scanty praise,
Whilst candour crowns him with Apollo's bays."

Mr. Sheridan was highly gratified with the approbation of one who, though so young, was so intelligent an auditress; he eagerly sought her acquaintance; and thus was another distinguished accession made to the band of her literary friends.

Among the pupils of the Misses More were two young ladies of the name of Turner, whose cousin, Edward Turner, Esq. was then residing about six miles from Bristol,

"Where beauteous Belmont rears her modest brow
To view Sabrina's silver waves below;"[2]

a situation of peculiar beauty, considerably improved by all that wealth and taste could contribute to its embellishment. The neighbouring hamlet is called "Failand;" which our youthful poetess, in her "Bleeding Rock," interprets *Fairyland;* but whatever may be the true etymology, the beauty of the surrounding scenery is unquestionable. To the local attractions of Belmont Mr. Turner added those of a cultivated mind and

[1] Individuals, it is believed, were here intended.
[2] "The Bleeding Rock."

refined conversation. His house was, in consequence, the favourite resort of the young, in whose society he took much pleasure. His cousins, of course, were constant guests at Belmont during their vacations, and they were permitted to ask their friends to accompany them. The two youngest governesses, Hannah and Martha, being about the same age with themselves, were often thus invited. The cultivated intellect and elegant taste of Hannah were well calculated to make an impression on her accomplished host. He consulted her on the ornamental economy of his estate; and much of the artificial beauty which still belongs to it acknowledges her creative taste. The "Inscription on a Cenotaph in a Garden," (Works, vol. ii. p. 66.) still appears, though slightly varying from the revised form in which she published it, on the monument erected by Mr. Turner to the memory of his friend Joseph Farrell, Esq.; and at the summit of a steep woody eminence, ascended by a straight path, and commanding a wide range of varied scenery, a board still bears this inspiration of her Muse, which may seem to the classical reader an amplification of a noble passage in Hesiod[1], though it is very unlikely that Hannah was then familiar, even through her native tongue, with the meditations of the old Ascræan.

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[1] Τῆς ἀρετῆς ἱδρῶτα θεοὶ προπάροιθεν ἔθηκαν
ἀθάνατοι· μακρός τε καὶ ὄρθιος οἶμος ἐπ' αὐτὴν,
καὶ τρηχὺς τὸ πρῶτον· ἐπὴν δ' εἰς ἄκρον ἵκηαι,
ῥηϊδίη δὴ ἔπειτα πέλει, χαλεπὴ περ ἐοῦσα.

Hesiod, Op. et Di. I. 287.

" O you who pass these sylvan glades,
Embower'd in cool refreshing shades,
Allow, beneath this spreading tree,
One moment to morality.
When lab'ring up the steep ascent,
Your eyes upon this summit bent,
Toilsome and long the way appear'd,
And you the undertaking fear'd;
Yet as you near and nearer drew,
The labour lessen'd to your view;
And when this calm recess you've gain'd,
You wonder that the thought had pain'd.
'Tis so with virtue: when we see
From far the sweet divinity,
Her distant radiance we admire,
But think the tedious road may tire.
'Tis true she is with roses crown'd,
Yet intervening thorns are found.
At length, determin'd to pursue
The object that enchants our view,
With noble resolution arm'd,
By hope inspir'd, by glory charm'd,
Despising vice, contemning rest,
We venture, persevere,—are blest."

In the grounds at Belmont there is a picturesque rock, exhibiting in some parts red spots of sandstone; this readily suggested to the imagination of Mr. Turner's guest a mythological explanation; and to it we owe a graceful imitation of Ovid, which its authoress intituled "The Bleeding Rock."

Mr. Turner found his friend so agreeable and valuable a companion, that, although there was a disparity of more than twenty years, (Hannah being then twenty-two,) a matrimonial offer wsa the consequence. Mr. Turner was accepted; and

Hannah, preparing to become the wife of a man of large property, renounced her share in the school, and incurred considerable expenses. The day was now fixed for the marriage; but, before its arrival, Mr. Turner, very unaccountably, postponed it. When the day thus newly appointed came, a second postponement was proposed from the same quarter; and afterwards a third. The matter was thus protracted for about six years. Hannah's elder sisters and Sir James Stonhouse now interposed, and prevailed with her to renounce the alliance of a man who was capable of treating her with so much caprice. On this communication Mr. Turner still expressed the hope that he might not be considered as absolutely discarded; but, finding Miss More firm, he offered to settle an annuity upon her by way of compensation for the injury she had suffered through his waywardness; a proposal which was promptly and decidedly declined. Mr. Turner then sought an interview with Sir James Stonhouse, to whom he renewed the offer of the annuity, saying, at the same time, that he would marry Miss More at any hour the doctor would call upon him to do so, if only her consent could be obtained. Sir James, having consulted with some other friends on both sides, agreed to accept for Miss More the sum of two hundred pounds per annum. The subject of this negotiation was altogether ignorant of its existence until it was concluded, and she then refused to become a party; but the importunity of Mr. Turner and the friends who had conducted the arrange-

ment at length prevailed on her to consent where further resistance might be thought ungracious and resentful. Mr. Turner, indeed, always entertained the most respectful friendship for Miss More. His first toast daily, whether alone or in society, was "Hannah More." Twenty years after these transactions, when the sisters were settled at Cowslip Green, a gentleman made his appearance at the gate, who, admiring the beauty of the situation and garden, was requested by the eldest sister to walk in and inspect the place. On inquiring to whom it belonged, Mr. Turner (for he it was) was surprised and gratified to hear the name of Hannah More. A friendly conversation immediately ensued, and the long suspended intercourse was revived on the most cordial terms. Mr. Turner occasionally dined at Cowslip Green, and was present at the last festival given by Mrs. More to the school-children on the Mendip. Mrs. More made a point of presenting him a copy of every work she published. Mr. Turner often remarked to his friends that Providence had overruled his wishes to be the husband of Hannah More, and that she was intended for higher things. At his death he bequeathed to her the sum of one thousand pounds; thus testifying to the last the esteem with which he regarded her.

It was, perhaps, necessary to be somewhat circumstantial in detailing the particulars of the above transaction, which has been so grossly misrepresented by some, and so libellously characterized by others. The above narrative may be

implicitly relied on in every particular, as it rests not only on contemporary letters in the hands of the writer, but on the evidence of a lady who was as well the Misses More's pupil at the time as a connection of Mr. Turner; and who was fully acquainted with all the circumstances. The rectitude and propriety of Hannah's conduct were never questioned at the time. Mrs. Gwatkin, her early munificent and judicious friend, approved it entirely; the school continued to sustain its elevated reputation; and Hannah was as much countenanced and beloved by the purest in religion and the strictest in morals as by the most distinguished in scholarship, philosophy, and taste.

THE
LIFE
OF
HANNAH MORE

INKSTAND,

MADE OF THE MULBERRY-TREE PLANTED BY SHAKSPEARE, PRESENTED TO HANNAH MORE BY GARRICK.

They that use this world as not abusing it. 1 *Cor.* vii. 31.

CHAPTER II.

HANNAH'S matrimonial disappointment appears to have determined her in the adoption of single life, though none could have been better adapted than herself to be the solace and ornament of the connubial hearth. She afterwards received two offers, which she declined without hesitation, but with so little offence, that the respective parties always maintained with her the most friendly relations. One of these was the well-known writer, Dr. Langhorne, then vicar of Blagdon, with whom she long maintained a poetical and literary corre-

spondence. The introduction took place in 1773, while she was recovering from an attack of ague, at Uphill, on the Somersetshire coast. The doctor was at the time taking his recreation at the neighbouring and better known watering-place, Weston-super-Mare. They often rode together upon the sands; Miss More, as the custom then was, on the pillion behind her servant; and when it happened that either chanced to miss the other, a paper was placed in a cleft post near the water, generally containing some quaint remark, or a few verses. On one of these occasions, the Doctor committed his wit and gallantry to the sand, on which he inscribed with his cane:

"Along the shore
Walk'd Hannah More;
Waves! let this record last:
Sooner shall ye,
Proud earth and sea,
Than what she writes, be past.
JOHN LANGHORNE."

Miss More, with her riding-whip, wrote immediately beneath:

"Some firmer basis, polish'd Langhorne, choose,
To write the dictates of thy charming muse;
Thy strains in solid characters rehearse,
And be thy tablet lasting as thy verse.
HANNAH MORE."

After this, the Misses More, Hannah especially, were frequent guests at Blagdon Vicarage; and Hannah has described with much grace a Sunday visit to this hospitable and elegant abode, which, as I am not aware that it has ever been published, will be found in the Appendix (IV).

In the same year, Miss More published "The Search after Happiness," which had suffered so much from careless transcription, that she thought it due to her own reputation to give the world an authorized copy. Not long after, desirous of extending her acquaintance in the polite and literary circles to whom her reputation was now sufficient introduction, she visited London in company with her sisters. The drama was naturally her favourite province of literature; her earliest published production was dramatick; she had even at this time sketched, if not completed, some of her "Sacred Dramas;" and she had already translated some of Metastasio's operas, which her subsequent fastidiousness led her to suppress, with one solitary exception, which will be presently noticed. Accordingly, the theatre, on her arrival in town, was the great point of attraction; and Garrick the great object of curiosity. The character in which she first saw him was Lear; and her description of his powers in a letter to a common friend so clearly evinced the correctness and vigour of her dramatick conceptions, that Garrick immediately sympathized with her taste, and felt curious to see her. In a few days, therefore, after her arrival in town, Miss More was introduced to one who had long been to her imagination a being so isolated in the elevation of his genius as not to be so much as approachable, except by the few minds of kindred order, the Johnsons, the Goldsmiths, and the Reynoldses. Garrick was delighted with his new acquaintance, and took pride and pleasure in introducing her in

the splendid circle of genius in which he moved; to the Royal Family, who inquired of him concerning her, he spoke in terms of the most ardent commendation; Mrs. Montagu, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Johnson, rapidly succeeded in her acquaintance; and in the course of six weeks (for such was the limit of this visit) she had become intimate with the greatest names in intellect and taste.

Nor did her familiarity with living genius induce neglect of the departed. The correspondence of her sisters at this period contains frequent allusions to the laborious assiduity with which she now cultivated in particular the study of the Roman classicks. In one of her letters, Sarah More says: "from her uprising till her downlying she (Hannah) does nothing but read Latin;" and in another: "the poet is a lazy, idle poet, and does nothing at all but read Virgil and Cicero." But "the poet" was *not* idle in her vocation; she had polished a free imitation of Metastasio's "Attilio Regolo," which she published in 1774 under the title of "The Inflexible Captive." Although not considered by her "sufficiently bustling and dramatick for representation,"[1] publick opinion differed. The following year it was acted in Exeter, and afterwards in Bath, with the warmest applause. On the latter occasion Langhorne wrote the prologue, and Garrick the epilogue. The Misses More were all present, and

[1] Advertisement to the play.

Garrick was behind the scenes. Sarah thus speaks of its reception: "All the world of dukes, lords, and barons were there. I sat next a duke and a lord. All expressed the highest approbation of the whole. Never was a piece represented there known to have received so much applause. A shout continued for some minutes after the curtain dropt." It was the wish of Garrick, though not of Hannah, that it should be acted at Covent Garden; but a pique on the part of the principal actress rendered this impracticable.

To return, however, to the year 1774. It is seldom that a contested election proves a favourable court of homage for the claims of literature; yet such was now the renown of Hannah, that in the celebrated election for Bristol in this year, which lasted several weeks, and during which the utmost tumult prevailed, a party of Mr. Cruger's friends suddenly halted beneath the window of the Misses More's house, and were desired by their leader to give "*three cheers to Sappho!*" and "More, Sappho, and Cruger for ever!"[1] rang to the skies. "It puzzled" (says Miss Sarah More) "many of the gazing multitude, particularly the females, who wanted to know if Sappho was another candidate; but, luckily, our friend the alderman at next door explained the mystery, and informed them that Sappho was nothing more

[1] It may be right to observe that the Misses More, who on *this* occasion supported the cause of Cruger, were altogether opposed to him in the election of 1780. In the first instance he impugned the policy of the American war; in the second he openly advocated the rebellion, and his mob marched under the thirteen stripes.

than a harmless she poet, who formerly made verses, and the whole was a compliment to *you know whom.*" On the retirement of Lord Clare from this contest, Edmund Burke was put in nomination, who, during the election, was frequently the guest of the Misses More. The mind of Hannah could scarcely be insensible to the genius of Burke. Her admiration of him was most ardent. When his place on the poll rendered his success unquestionable, the sisters sent him one evening a congratulatory tribute in the form of a cockade, in the composition of which the mind and hand of Hannah were conspicuously present. It was composed of the colours which, in his treatise, he classes under the beautiful and the sublime [1]; and was enwreathed with myrtle, ivy, laurel, and bay, sprinkled with silver, and decorated with silver tassels. On the back was the word BURKE, with the following mottoes:

> "He is himself the great sublime he draws."
> "In action faithful, and in honour clear."
> "Correct with spirit, elegant with ease."
> "Justum et tenacem propositi virum."

The servant was ordered to deliver the box containing the cockade, and to disappear. Burke, not suspecting the contents, opened it in a large

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[1] These are, for the sublime, "sad and fuscous colours, as black, or brown, or deep purple, or the like;" and for the beautiful, "the milder of every sort; light greens; soft blues; weak whites; pink reds; and violets."—*Burke's Inquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful*, ii. 16. and iii. 17.

company, who were highly delighted with the compliment; and he affirmed it could only come from his Park Street friends. The cockade graced his committee-room until the chairing day, when he wore it in triumph. During the procession it was observed that he was unusually hoarse; Hannah presented him with a wreath of flowers, to which was attached the following couplet:

> "Great Edmund's hoarse, they say; the reason's clear:—
> Can Attick lungs respire Bœotian air?"

On the following day, Burke called on the sisters previous to his departure for town, and expressed himself to Hannah on the cockade "in such terms," says the eldest in a letter to Mrs. Gwatkin, "that never, no never, were compliments dictated in such a charming manner before." On asking Hannah whether she had any commands to her friend Miss Reynolds (Sir Joshua's sister), she said she would trouble him with a letter. The letter reached Miss Reynolds by the hands of her brother, and she opened it in the presence of Dr. Johnson; when it was found to contain a complimentary poetical address to Burke. Chary of his commendations as the doctor was, he did not hesitate immediately to say, "Human language cannot soar higher."

In the following year (1775), Miss More again visited the metropolis, and mingled with the same distinguished and intellectual society. Her "Search after Happiness" had reached a fifth edition in the year previous, and a sixth in this. In the beginning of this year an edition was sent from

Philadelphia, with two complimentary poems addressed to the author; and the profits of the sale had netted 100*l*. She thought, therefore, nor without reason, that she had established sufficient literary reputation to justify her in setting a high pecuniary value on her writings. She therefore offered at once to Mr. (afterwards Alderman) Cadell two little poems, to form a thin quarto, after the fashion of the day; requesting to know what he would give for them, and stating at the same time that she would not part with them for "a very paltry consideration." Mr. Cadell, though he had not seen the poems, was so well prepared to entertain high expectations, that he immediately offered to give Miss More whatever Goldsmith might have received for his "Deserted Village." This she was unable to discover; and therefore she laid her demand at forty guineas, which the popularity of the volume amply justified. It comprised "Sir Eldred of the Bower," a tale which appears to have been suggested by the taste for ballad literature, which Percy's "Relicks of Ancient Poetry" had revived; and "The Legend of the Bleeding Rock" before mentioned. The former of these pieces was honoured by the revision, and even more, by the critical touch, of Johnson, whose pen has furnished the stanza which now appears in it:

> "My scorn has oft the dart repell'd
> Which guileful beauty threw;
> But goodness heard, and grace beheld,
> Must every heart subdue."

The religious character of Hannah More is scarcely less conspicuous in this trifle than in the

"Search after Happiness." The conclusion points a weighty moral:

> "The deadliest wounds with which we bleed
> Our crimes inflict alone;
> Man's mercies from God's hand proceed;
> His miseries from his own."

The correspondence which attended the publication of this volume resulted in the intimate friendship which Miss More cultivated with Alderman Cadell (who was a native of Bristol) until his death in 1802; and of which his son was the inheritor.

Of this volume she thus modestly writes to Mrs. Gwatkin: "I own I have my doubts as to its success; but it is weak to nourish apprehensions about such a *bagatelle* as the success of a few trifling verses. I sometimes blame myself even for writing them, and am often tempted to think that I spend too much of that time in measuring of syllables and arranging periods, which ought to be employed to better purposes and more durable ends. Then again I am reconciled to myself by reflecting that I never engage in them but as a substitute for other amusements; that it stands me in the stead of visiting, of balls, and of cards; and that it is cheaper, safer, and, perhaps, as innoxious, as either of the above diversions, especially as I hope so to write that I shall never 'make one worthy man my foe;' and I flatter myself that the inoffensiveness of my Muse will in some degree atone for her not being 'a Muse of fire.'"

Thus, from the first, were Miss More's relaxations and amusements grave, rational, and elegant;

and tending to the same object with her most serious labours, the diffusion of piety and virtue.

Her acquaintance with Garrick had now ripened into intimacy; and, in her subsequent intercourse with metropolitan society, she was mostly domiciliated in his villa at Hampton, or his house in the Adelphi.

It is much to be regretted that records of Hannah More at this period are so scanty. Many interesting particulars of her converse with the greatest minds of that time are irrecoverably lost, "carent quia vate sacro." It is probable that her sister Martha had preserved not a few choice gleanings; and it is to a letter written by her in this year (1775) that I am indebted for what follows. The sisters were one day dining in the Adelphi, at one of Garrick's small parties, at which was present "a young gentleman of family and fortune, and greatly accomplished," who had been visiting most of the courts of Europe, and was just about to publish his travels in Spain. The rest is in the writer's own words: "Hannah sat mute; only sometimes addressed herself to Mr. Garrick. However, this was not to last for ever. Mrs. G. threatened H. to discover who she was; but she entreated she would be silent. At length the discovery was made by the lady of the house saying, in her sweet pretty foreign accent, 'Pray, Sir, why don't you address your Spanish to this lady, and see if she pronounces well?' The gentleman stared, and instantly made violent love to her in Italian, little thinking that in that language the lady was his match; but when he made what he

thought these vast discoveries, he turned to Mr. Garrick,—'Why, Sir, did you not tell me I was in company with a learned lady?' 'With a *learned* lady, Sir,' replies the universal enchanter; 'Why, Sir, that lady is a great genius! Sir, she has published more than you ever will with all your travelling! She is MY DRAMATICK PUPIL, Sir!' Oh! the poor dear petrified gentleman! You never, Madam, saw a man so astonished; as he seems to think printing the *ne plus ultra* of all human perfection. He then paid vast attention to Miss, and was quite struck when he attended to her replies, as you know she can find a pretty answer for most questions."

The "dramatick pupil" did honour to her tutor. When one of those who

> "——— se lectori credere malunt
> Quam spectatoris fastidia ferre superbi,"[1]

she had involuntarily received a triumphant verdict from the pit; and she now dreaded less the deliberate encounter of that stern tribunal, when duly prepared to meet it.

Accordingly, in the spring of 1777, under the eye and advice of her gifted friend, she planned her tragedy of "Percy," which she completed at Bristol; and in the November of the same year it was produced on the boards of Covent Garden theatre. Garrick wrote both prologue and epilogue, and sustained the principal character. The success of the play was complete; perhaps at that time unsurpassed. It had a run of twenty-one nights,

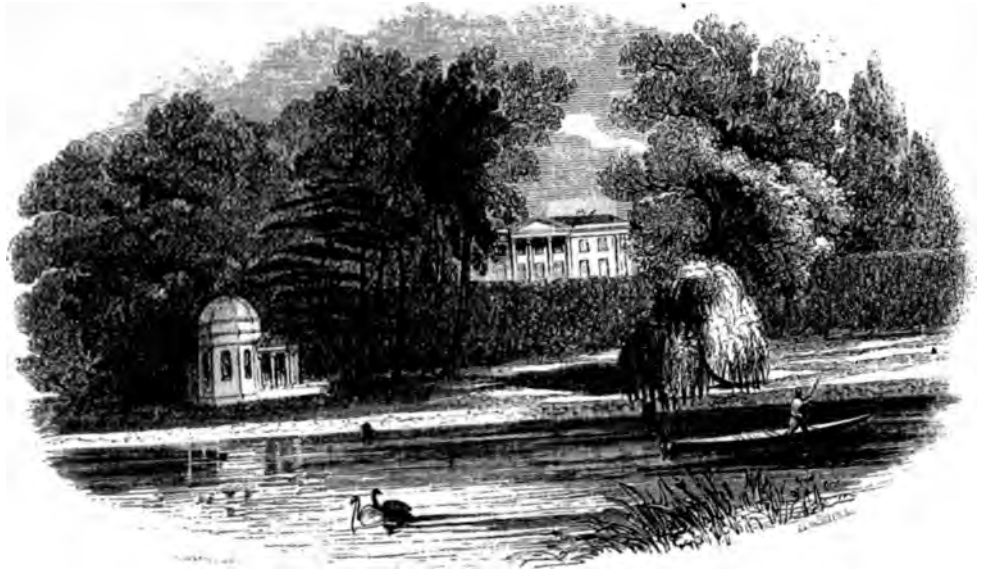
[1] Horat. lib. ii. epist. i. 214.

and soon became universally acted at the provincial theatres. Nor was its popularity confined to England. It was translated into French by M. de Calonne, prime minister of France; and, in a German dress, "Percy" appeared on the stage of Vienna. Miss More received on the occasion the most flattering honours and distinctions; the whole blood of the Percies did homage to their minstrel. The Duke of Northumberland, Earl Percy, and the editor of the "Relicks," all came forward, complimented, and thanked her. An edition of nearly four thousand copies of the play was sold in a fortnight, and the authoress realized on the whole nearly 600*l.*

The plot of this tragedy, founded on the story of Raoul de Coucy, (which has some points of affinity with that of Tancred and Sigismunda,) is sufficiently dramatick.

The palpable anachronism which puts the Crusades after Chevy Chase, is thus excused in a letter to Garrick: "I have supposed it to happen some time after the battle of Chevy Chase: no offence to history if I have been guilty of a few anachronisms; for, luckily for me, I believe the whole story of Chevy Chase to be purely legendary, as I cannot find the date, or even the event, in any history. If you please to look into the first volume of Percy's Relicks, page 253, you will see on what I have founded the quarrel between Earl Raby and Percy." [1]

[1] I can find nothing in the first volume of Percy's Relicks which at all bears upon the subject, although there is much which relates to the feud between the families of Percy and Douglas.



GARRICK'S VILLA, HAMPTON, MIDDLESEX.

The moral of the play (that revenge recoils upon the avenger) is concentrated in Raby's speech, with which it concludes:

> " ——— With impious pride I snatch'd
> The bolt of vengeance from the hand of heaven.
> My soul submissive bows. A righteous God
> Has made my crime become my chastisement;
> And pull'd those miseries on my guilty head,
> I would have drawn on others. O! 'tis just!
> 'Tis righteous retribution! I submit!"

"Percy," therefore, like all the productions of the same pen, is not deficient in valuable moral; and it may be remarked that both the moral and much of the business of the play are the same that form the interest of the grandest tragedy of modern times, (if we may so designate an undramatick production),—"The Bride of Lammermoor." The scene in the second act, where Elwina discloses to Percy her marriage with Douglas, is parallel to the entrance of the Master of Ravenswood, when Lucy Ashton is signing the fatal document. Percy is, however, a very different, though not less noble character; while Ravenswood instantly destroys the pledge of his plighted affections, Percy will by no entreaty be prevailed on to part with the scarf.

That "Percy" has not for many years been revived, is nothing extraordinary. The improvements and declensions of publick taste alike conspire to exclude it from the stage. It is astonishing that Garrick, with his devoted admiration of Shakspeare, should yet have been the great patron of a school systematically opposed to the greatest of dramatists, and even of poets. The frigid uni-

ties, the stiff proprieties, which the critick thought he found in his Aristotle, but which, in truth, receded widely from the theory of the Stagirite, and still more widely from the practice of the Attick stage, were, in Miss More's dramatick days, the common law of the British theatre, and the non-observance of them was theatrical outlawry. The maiden chastity of the Greek Muse, sublimed into apathy by the criticks and dramatists of the age of Lewis XIV., became the coldness of a corpse at the touch of Voltaire. Yet from this deadly enemy of Shakspeare, of whose beauties he had as much conception as of those of religion or truth, did the English stage condescend to receive her edition of Aristotle. Shakspeare, it is true, kept his ground unmoved; but his great contemporaries were rarely tolerated; and wo to the *modern* who broke the canons of Ferney! This slavish principle is now obsolete; and the plays which were composed during its influence, however little affected by it, have become unpopular in the closet; while on the stage, alas! neither Shakspeare nor even Voltaire is permitted to rule, and Johnson conjectured but too truly.[1]

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[1] But who the coming changes can presage,
And mark the future periods of the stage?
Perhaps, if skill could distant times explore,
New Behns, new Durfeys, yet remain in store:
Perhaps where Lear has rav'd, and Hamlet died,
On flying cars new sorcerers may ride.
Perhaps (for who can guess the effects of chance?)
Here Hunt may box, or Mahomet may dance.
Prologue at the opening of Drury Lane Theatre.

While occupied with the composition of "Percy," Miss More was also engaged on a book of a very different kind; the first of her ethical treatises; which appeared in the same year, under the title of "Essays on various Subjects, principally designed for Young Ladies." This work the authoress afterwards suppressed; not, apparently, from any change of opinion, but because she had incorporated the substance of it with her other writings, and treated the topicks it discussed more elaborately and diffusely. Accordingly, it does not appear in the edition of her works published in 1830. It is, however, a valuable little manual of good sense, taste, and piety, and may be read with advantage by all ages and both sexes. The chapter "On the Importance of Religion" is illustrative of the ruling principle by which Hannah More was guided at all periods of life; and the concluding paragraph may be taken as the inverse measure of her conduct in the rich springtide of her life and morning splendour of her fame. "To put off religion till we have lost all taste for amusement,—to refuse listening to the voice of the charmer till our enfeebled organs can no longer listen to the voice of 'singing men and singing women,' and not to devote one day to heaven till we have 'no pleasure in them' ourselves, is but an ungracious offering. And it is a wretched sacrifice to the God of heaven to present him with the remnants of decayed appetites, and the leavings of extinguished passions."

Miss More's sojourn with the Garricks was

productive of the closest friendship between her and those excellent persons. Her taste and genius bore so near a resemblance to those of her distinguished host, that they mutually found pleasure in each other's society; and Mrs. Garrick, charmed with the amiable and devout character of Hannah, and loving every object of her husband's regard, treated her with the tenderest affection. The strong religious principle of Hannah made her a comfort and a counsellor to her friends; and Mrs. Garrick, although a Romanist, used to say that Miss More was her domestick chaplain. Hannah was not one on whom kindness of any sort could be lost; and her gratitude and love to her friends at Hampton seemed almost to overpower expression. In the endeavour to give utterance to what she felt, she had written a trifle called "An Ode from H. M., at Bristol, to Mr. Garrick's house-dog Dragon, at Hampton." Such was the avidity with which every production of her pen was sought, that manuscript copies of this little piece rapidly multiplied; and at length she was so much urged to print it, that, in 1778, it made its appearance before the world. A thousand copies were sold in the first week. It beautifully expresses her affection for the Garricks. She imagines herself to take Dragon's place, and enlarges on the care and solicitude she would, in his charge, exhibit for her friends. Garrick was at this period performing each of his characters for the last time, with a view to retirement from the stage. To this circumstance a great part of

the ode alludes. The last stanza, as usual in Mrs. More's compositions, contains a moral application. Rarely shall we find a passage of nobler or simpler grandeur than that which conludes this little poem:

> " How wise! a short retreat to steal;
> The vanity of life to feel,
> And from its cares to fly;
> To act one calm domestick scene,
> Earth's bustle and the grave between;
> Retire, and learn to die."

At the same time with this were published the " Heroick Epistle to Miss Sally Horne, aged three years," the daughter of Bishop Horne; and a little tale called " The Puppet Show," containing a lesson which the writings of Hannah More so abundantly teach,—the essential importance of good nature, good sense, and piety, as requisites in a wife.

Having been so eminently successful with " Percy," Miss More, under the superintendence of Garrick, composed another tragedy, which she originally called " The Bridal Day," a title afterwards exchanged for that of " The Fatal Falsehood." The plot is well contrived, and affords good scope for dramatick action. The moral of the play is told by the authoress in the prologue, which she wrote herself:

> " *Self-conquest* is the lesson books should preach;
> *Self-conquest* is the theme the stage should teach;
> Vouchsafe to learn this obvious duty here;
> The verse though feeble, yet the moral's clear."

In a letter to Mrs. Gwatkin, Miss Sarah More

writes, "Mr. Gwatkin told me that he had mentioned to you the success of 'Fatal Falsehood.' On the night of its appearance it was indeed *greatly* received: never any thing went off with more applause. When the curtain dropped, the house absolutely shouted." The manager, however, stopped the run of the play after the fourth night, on account of the advanced state of the season, (May,) and, as Miss Sarah More expresses it, "of fifty *et cæteras*." "The play" (she adds) "is universally admired, and has added greatly to the reputation of the author. Even Franklin, Colman[1], and the whole envious tribe, openly avow their approbation of the piece." The Bristol manager borrowed the play of Mr. Harris, and produced it at Bristol and at Bath with great effect.

It was on the production of this drama that Miss More first experienced a truth with which she became afterwards familiar:

"'Envy will merit, as its shade, pursue."

The play was scurrilously attacked by several periodical writers, but in particular by Mrs. Cowley the actress, who, in the St. James's Chronicle, accused the authoress of having plagiarized from a *prose* tragedy of her own, intituled "Albina." Miss More's first feeling on this shameful charge was deep indignation, and she purposed prose-

[1] It is but justice to Colman's memory to say that Miss Sarah More allows in another letter that his approbation was conveyed "in a very handsome manner."

cuting the libeller. But as her object was nothing more than self-vindication, she very justly thought that a solemn disclaimer in the paper which had first given currency to the assertion, and in some other prints, would be more efficient for that purpose. This therefore she adopted, denying in the most express language her knowledge that such a play as "Albina" existed. In writing to Mr. Cadell for his advice on this subject, she says characteristically, "I hope I have not said a word that looks like a wish to injure Mrs. Cowley, or that carries any thing like revenge or womanish pride. I want not to hurt *her*, but to clear *myself*. I am contented *she* should be the first genius, so that *I* am not the greatest thief." On Mrs. Cowley reiterating her assertion, Miss More purposed to defend herself by affidavit; her friends, however, dissuaded her from a step so unnecessary to her cause, and the calumniator and the calumny sunk into contempt. A letter, preserved among the papers of the late Mr. Cadell, is evidence that Miss More had not then to learn the commandment of overcoming evil with good, which she had so many occasions to practise, and which on all she so faithfully fulfilled. In the present instance, too, there was not the shadow of ostentation or sinister motive. The act was truly "in secret;" and, but for the preservation of the letter alluded to, must have remained such till "He who seeth in secret shall reward it openly." "I have long since," writes she to Mr. Cadell, "forgiven Mrs. Cowley most heartily."

* * * "I return you many thanks for your wise and friendly advice. Believe me, let them say and do what they please, not a word shall ever escape my pen. I never should have noticed her but at the injunction of my friends." * * * "I am grieved that her malice springs from her poverty. Perhaps, had she been at ease, she had not been wicked. A friend writes me word that Mr. Colman intends giving her the chance of another benefit. Should that happen, I should be very glad you would get somebody to take a ticket; and *if you will be so good as send a guinea for it, as from yourself, I'll thankfully repay it you.* If she has no benefit, perhaps you would contrive to *give the guinea as from a friend of yours, for a copy of her play*[1], *to her bookseller.* I would not for the world she should suspect whence it came, as all pity from me must look like insult, *which*, GOD KNOWS, *is far from my heart.*" Such were, from first to last, Hannah's replies to malice and defamation.

"The Fatal Falsehood" never attained the popularity of "Percy." It was produced at an unfavourable season of the year. During part of the time of preparation, Miss More was confined to her bed by rheumatick gout. She even composed the prologue when she had no use of her limbs, and had two perpetual blisters on each side her head. But one melancholy circumstance, above

[1] The preface to this play was full of calumnious charges against Hannah More.

all, contributed to this comparative failure. Ere "The Fatal Falsehood" was completed, the friend under whose judgment and direction it had grown, — beneath whose influential patronage it was to have been produced, —and whose powers had so greatly contributed to the success of "Percy,"— had acted out the "calm domestick scene" which he had retired to enjoy. In January 1779, Garrick took his farewell of the stage of life. To the effect of this event on Hannah More we shall presently return. Her tenderest and kindest attentions were now lavished on the consolation of the widow. Mrs. Garrick had not been inattentive to those resources which alone could furnish solace and support in that hour of utmost need. Devoted with all woman's intensity of love to her gifted partner, she had yet learned to love him in subserviency to the good Giver of this and every other blessing she had enjoyed.[1] In the cul-

[1] In an extract of a letter from Miss More to her sister Sarah, preserved in another from the latter to Mrs. Gwatkin, we have the following interesting particulars of the first interview between Miss More and Mrs. Garrick after their loss:—"I got to Mr. Rackett's, where Mrs. Garrick was every moment expected, as the undertakers were preparing to hang her house with black. She was prepared for meeting me. She ran into my arms, where we both remained silent for ten minutes. At last she whispered me, 'I have this moment embraced his coffin! and you come next.' She soon recovered herself, and said with great composure, 'The goodness of God to me is inexpressible. I desired to die; but it is His will I should live, and I will obey it. He has convinced me He will not let my life be quite miserable, for He gives astonishing strength to my body, and grace to my heart; neither I deserve, but I am thankful for both.' I never saw such respectable

tivation of that deep spirit of submission which might enable her to endure with patience and profit the severest trial which earth could have in store for her, she was doubtless materially assisted by her pious guest; and to the same kind aid, under a fatherly Chastener, she was indebted for continued support, now that her hour was come. Hannah, in the strict seclusion of Hampton, found her best satisfaction in furnishing the aid which none other was so capable of affording to her bereaved friend, of whom for the next five years she was almost the constant companion, and whose friendship, until the death of Mrs. Garrick in 1822, at the age of ninety-nine, she assiduously and unremittingly cultivated. [1]

sorrow, nor more perfect submission." In a letter from Martha More to Mrs. Gwatkin (date uncertain) we have the following:—"We had a letter yesterday from Hampton. Never did I hear of such a woman! such dignity in her grief! such calmness! such piety! it is astonishing. She was at a friend's house during the time of his lying in state. On their return to the Adelphi my sister writes thus:—'On Wednesday night we came to this house; she bore it with great tranquillity; but what was my surprise to see her go alone into the chamber and bed in which *he* had died that day fortnight! She had a delight in it beyond expression. I asked the next day how she went through it. She told me, very well; that she first prayed with great composure, then went and kissed the dear bed, and got into it with more pleasure than any she had lain in since his death.'"

[1] The charge of neglect towards Mrs. Garrick, which has been made against Hannah More, is wholly unfounded. The duties which the latter had imposed on herself, withdrew her in her later years from London society; and Mrs. Garrick was little disposed to retire so far from town as her friend resided. Thus, their personal intercourse was, indeed, suspended, but with no suspension of their friendship or even their correspondence.

LOUISA, THE MAID OF THE HAYSTACK.

"I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." *Matt.* v. 44, 45.

CHAPTER III.

After the death of Garrick, Miss More never was present at any theatrical entertainment. Even the performance of her own last tragedy could not tempt her to risk the revival of associations which so painfully increased the intensity of abiding regrets. And when, some years after, Mrs. Siddons,

whom she had never seen, represented the heroine of "Percy," the authoress could not be prevailed on to witness the exhibition. Her account of the affair, as detailed by herself to Miss Ann Gwatkin, was as follows: "Now was the time I felt I ought to exert myself, as it is always better to commence with a great rather than with a small effort. I was strongly urged to go to the theatre, but did not go. With that day my trial was not ended, as on the following I met a large party at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, and by many I was asked with earnestness, 'How do you like *her?*' 'Like *whom?*' 'Why, Mrs. Siddons; of course you went to see her!' My answer in the negative astonished them. 'How could you be so wanting in curiosity?' It was then requisite to maintain my ground, and I replied, 'It was not a want of curiosity, but to have gone would have been inconsistent with my publickly professed opinions.'"[1] At the same time she abandoned writing for the stage. To gratify, however, her dramatick taste, she proceeded to complete a work which she had begun in very early years, and which is one of her most popular productions. This was the "Sacred Dramas," which were published in 1782. They were written principally for young persons,

[1] Mrs. Siddons afterwards enjoyed the intimacy of Hannah More, who had not, however, the full opportunity of comprehending her powers. Mrs. Siddons on one occasion recited to her the play of Hamlet, but Miss More had heard the same play recited by Garrick, and did not therefore so much enjoy the recitation as she might have done had another play been selected. The subject of her antidramatick opinions will be discussed at a more convenient period of the narrative.

and are admirable in this view. The attempt was bold, as Johnson, whose decisions were then received as the last appeal in polite literature, had just delivered his oracle on the subject very explicitly.[1] Fortified, however, not only by the precedent of Cowley's "Davideïs," but by the still more impregnable authority of the bard of Paradise, in taking Scripture as a groundwork of poetry; with the examples before her of "Samson Agonistes" and "Athalie," not to refer to the more ancient and solemn compositions of Apollinarius, Hannah More ventured to controvert the supremacy of Johnsonian authority, and obtained, even from the publick of 1782, a triumphant verdict. She has, however, so far done homage to the critical "colossus," or rather, perhaps, to piety and just taste, that she has allowed herself small latitude in the conduct of these dramas. They adhere closely to the Scripture narrative, which they very naturally and agreeably cast into the dramatick form. Very shortly after their publication they were translated into German.

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1 "Sacred History has always been read with submission, reverence, and an imagination overawed and controlled. We have been accustomed to acquiesce in the nakedness and simplicity of the authentick narratives, and to repose on its veracity with such humble confidence as represses curiosity. We go with the historian as he goes, and stop with him when he stops. All amplification is frivolous and vain; all addition to that which is already sufficient for the purposes of religion, seems not only useless, but in some degree profane."—*Johnson's Life of Cowley, speaking of the "Davideïs."*

The friends who principally shared with Mrs. Garrick Miss More's society, were Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Boscawen, ladies of equal literary *pretension*, though far from equal in literary acquirement; but both entertaining the most affectionate esteem for their common friend. To the latter Miss More dedicated her poem on Sensibility, which was published together with the Sacred Dramas. Sensibility was at that time *the fashion;* but by this expression was not to be understood an acute susceptibility of human suffering, much less a self-denying effort to relieve it. The sentiment was perfectly compatible with the most heartless disregard of real afflictions, and the most selfish prosecution of personal objects.[1] It was claimed by the town belle, who defrauded the revenue, and starved the native manufacturer; and by the man of pleasure, who triumphed in the ruin and guilt which he was scattering around him. To weep by the couch of Le Fevre, or sympathize with the sorrows of Maria, was title enough to "Sensibility." Miss More, in her elegant and animated poem, indignantly vindicates the real sentiment, and exposes the counterfeit; and to no pen more than hers does the present age owe the diminution which has unquestionably taken place in morbid and hypocritical sensibility. The lines which begin with "Since trifles make

[1] What was intended by the term "sensibility" in fashionable life is admirably depicted by Mrs. More in "Cœlebs," under the character of Lady Melbury, who has the most refined compassion for "interesting persons," but ruins families by unpaid debts.

the sum of human things," and conclude with "Corrode our comfort, and destroy our ease," are in truth "golden verses," inspired by the truest sensibility, and inspiring it in turn; worthy to be committed to every memory, and engraven on every heart.[1]

Shortly after the publication of this poem, Miss More visited Oxford, where scholarship and gallantry united to pay every suitable compliment to "Sappho." In the common room of Pembroke College she found a print of Johnson, under which was inscribed the verse from her "Sensibility:"

"And is not JOHNSON ours? himself a host."

She was at this time on a visit to her friend Mrs. Kennicott, wife of the celebrated critical editor of the Old Testament. Among the gallant compliments which the wits of Oxford paid on the occasion, the following may be noticed for its brevity:

"Muses nine we had before;
But *Kennicott* has shown us—*More.*"

In the same year was published a little piece, intituled "Reflections of King Hezekiah in his

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[1] In this poem occurs the line,

"Thee, mitred Chester! all the nine shall boast."

The allusion is to Bishop Porteus's poem on Death. On this occasion the bishop wrote the following epigram:

"How potent is thy Muse, O More!
Whose vivifying breath
Can do what Muse ne'er did before,—
Give *life* and fame to—*death!*"

Sickness." It is a free paraphrase of the poem in Isaiah, xxxviii.; and the subject was suggested by a sermon preached by Sir James Stonhouse. The publication took place at the especial request of Bishop Lowth, although many were desirous of seeing it in print.

It was about the same time (1781), that the sympathies of Miss More were engaged in favour of a most interesting object, whether regarded personally, or with reference to the mystery which involves the story of her life. A pupil and intimate friend of Miss More, to whom I am indebted for the communication, being on a visit at Belmont, was one day surprised, on riding through the village of Flax Bourton, at the appearance of a remarkably delicate hand and arm gathering blackberries from a hedge beside a haystack, and emerging from a sleeve by no means of the finest texture. On turning round, the fair owner discovered a beauty of countenance, a delicacy of person, a taste in her mean but singular apparel, and a gracefulness of carriage, which at once convinced the spectatress she was no common peasant girl. Her countenance, apart from its loveliness, had an expression which in any face would have arrested attention. Her clothing was entirely woollen, and in the tucks of her dress she carried articles of earthenware. She was unemployed in any rural labour; she was neither travelling nor begging; but seemed to be wildly perambulating the small inclosure round the haystack. The lady addressed her, offered her money, (which she then

accepted,) and desired to see her the next morning at Belmont. She kept the appointment, and requested some milk, but arranged the money in a fanciful form at the side of the road; nor could she then be prevailed on to receive any money whatever. Being asked where she dwelt, she replied, "Under the haystack."

It was obvious that the unfortunate girl was insane; her patroness immediately inquired into her history, and found that she had been first discovered under the haystack some time previous; and that the ladies of the neighbourhood, finding it impossible to persuade her to enter a house, had, on that occasion, placed her in confinement in St. Peter's Hospital, Bristol. She had, however, shortly after, obtained her release, and returned six miles to her beloved haystack at Flax Bourton, where she had remained ever since, fed and protected by the compassion of the neighbours. A benevolent lady had offered her the shelter of a roof; but she had replied, with great pertinacity, "Trouble and misery dwell in houses, and there is no happiness but in liberty and fresh air." On this, some ladies of the neighbourhood subscribed and bought the haystack. She would receive no money or trinkets, but placed the money at the doors of houses, and suspended the trinkets on the trees. To this practice she made an exception in favour of bracelets and miniatures. She had sometimes desired to have a Queen Ann's half-crown sewed on a black ribbon, and would wear

it on her arm, kissing it with great delight, and saying it much resembled mamma.

The poor sufferer's new patroness immediately forwarded a statement of her case to the Misses More. With their customary activity and philanthropy, they immediately exerted themselves in behalf of the unhappy creature, and had her removed to Mr. Henderson's lunatick asylum at Hanham. A subscription was immediately instituted, to which Hannah herself largely contributed, and the application of which she directed. Poor Louisa (for by that name the maniack was commonly known) continued to experience the kindness of her benefactress until the 19th of December 1800, when she died in Guy's Hospital, whither she had been removed as an incurable.

It is certain that Louisa was a person accustomed to the usages of refined society, and, apparently, a German. She was, however, studiously reserved on the subject of her connections. On the morning when she first visited Belmont, Mr. Turner, inferring from her accent that she was a foreigner, addressed her in several continental languages; at last, on making his communication in German, she, although at that time in the highest spirits, immediately burst into a passionate flood of tears. The wife of a Danish captain of a vessel, resident in Bristol, visited her under the haystack, and conversed with her in German; when Louisa told her that she had been confined by her father in a convent at Sleswig,

because she would not marry the person of his choice, and had thence escaped with her lover. The Danish lady was afterwards reduced to be an upper servant in the house where Louisa was confined; but no further disclosures were made, although the unhappy maniack would not unfrequently ask in German for any thing she wanted.

Notwithstanding Louisa's caution, she was occasionally thrown off her guard. On one occasion, when the servants of the asylum ran to the window, she asked the cause; and, on being told it was a carriage and four horses, exclaimed, "A wonderful sight, truly! my father's carriage was always drawn by eight." When two gentlemen visited her at Mr. Henderson's, after some conversation, they said; "Shall we, Louisa, drive to Bohemia?" She instantly replied, "That is papa's own country." During her sojourn at Mr. Henderson's, a young man in a travelling carriage called at the house, and desired to see Louisa. The servants said he had landed from abroad, and had travelled post a night and a day. His manner and importunity prevailed with Mr. H. to grant the request, which at first he was unwilling to do. On seeing him, the poor maniack uttered a piercing scream; while the visitor, shocked at the spectacle, hid his face with both hands, and exclaiming, with an expression of horror, "It is herself!" sprang into his carriage, and hastened away with the utmost precipitation. Nor could Louisa be persuaded to look up until she was assured he had departed.

Miss More had scarcely become acquainted with

Louisa, before she published the few particulars she could glean respecting her in the St. James's Chronicle, under the title of "A Tale of real Wo." This account was forthwith translated into German, and circulated at Vienna; it was also printed in France; and thus the publick attention, as well abroad as in England, was directed to the subject.

In the year 1785, a French tract was published on the continent, but without any mention of author, publisher, or place of publication, although supposed to be printed in some part of the imperial dominions. It was intituled "L'Inconnue: Histoire Veritable;" and, if it be really what it professes, it scarcely leaves a doubt that the unfortunate lady of the haystack was none other than Mdlle. La Frëulen, the supposed illegitimate daughter of the Emperor Francis I. It would neither suit the limits nor the subject of these pages to enter at any length into that story; but the notice of Louisa would, perhaps, be incomplete without some allusion to it. When Joseph II. was on his travels in Italy, the King of Spain received a letter purporting to come from the Emperor, and imploring his protection for an illegitimate half-sister, till somewhat should be done towards her settlement in life. The king, suspecting some forgery, sent the letter to Joseph at Milan, who had neither written it, nor heard of the person; and he accordingly transmitted it to the Empress Maria Teresa; who immediately set on foot an inquiry, and arrested Mdlle. La Frëulen, at Bourdeaux. She was thence conducted to the Count

von Cobenzel, Imperial Minister at Brussels, to whom she detailed such a tissue of prevarications and falsehoods, as renders it difficult to know whether any part of her story is to be credited. There were, however, some points of her narrative in which she was consistent, and these certainly find a counterpart in the story of Louisa. She said that she had been told that the place where she was educated was called Bohemia: that she had been visited in her childhood by persons whom she understood to be her father and mother; that, after the death of the Emperor, she was conducted by an ecclesiastick to Hamburg, whence she was to embark for Bourdeaux, to be placed in a convent. That her horror of a convent made her leave her guide at Hamburg, and walk on with no settled purpose till night overtook her, and she lay down in a barn to sleep. Hence she advanced towards Sweden in a miserable carriage, from which she fell, and received so dangerous a wound in her head that she was conveyed to a neighbouring inn, and placed under the care of a surgeon.[1] At Stockholm, she was discovered by the Count di Belgioioso, the Imperial Ambassador, who found her a lodging, and treated her with great respect. It was here that she saw a picture, as she said, of the gentleman who often visited her in Bohemia, and whom she supposed to be her father. This

[1] Miss More examined the head of Louisa, to ascertain whether there were any appearances to connect her with this adventure, and found scars on the crown of the head and behind the ear.

was a portrait of the Emperor Francis. The shock was so severe that a violent fever ensued. This anecdote was confirmed by the Count di Belgioioso at the time. After her recovery, the Count acquainted her that she was charged with having eloped from Hamburg in company with a young Englishman. This charge she at first pertinaciously denied to the Count; but afterwards she admitted it, though she denied it again to the Count von Cobenzel. Dismissed from Stockholm as an impostor, she made her way back to Hamburg, and thence sailed to Bourdeaux. Here she involved herself in debt, and procured the forgery of various letters; among others, that which led to her apprehension. It is quite evident that she had no regard to truth, whether from moral depravity, or from a strange defect in education, in which her moral instruction was altogether neglected. Certain it is that she could neither read nor write. Nor is it less certain that Louisa appeared to be similarly ignorant. When offered books, she replied, "No; reading is study, and study makes me mad." Though books were left in the room with her, and she was closely watched, she was never observed to look into one. This was the more extraordinary, as she was evidently of a grade in life in which such an humble accomplishment as reading is universal. The result of La Frëulen's examination was that she was conducted to Quievraing, a small town between Mons and Valenciennes, where she was presented with fifty louis d'or, and there abandoned. This was

in the year 1769. Nothing more is known of her history, unless she was the Louisa who was first discovered in England in 1776.

While employed on the benevolent work of sheltering and protecting Louisa, another candidate for Miss More's liberality appeared. On her return to Bristol from Mrs. Montagu's villa at Sandleford, some verses were shown her, neither inexpressive nor inharmonious, purporting to be the work of a poor illiterate woman, who supplied the family with milk. Genius and distress were sufficient introductions to Hannah More, who immediately inquired into the woman's history and circumstances. Her name was Ann Yearsley, and she was about eight-and-twenty years of age. She had never received the slightest education, except writing, which she learned from her brother. Her stock of poetical reading was the "Paradise Lost," the "Night Thoughts," Pope's "Eloïsa," a few of Shakspeare's plays, and a translation of the "Georgicks," of which last she always spoke with great enthusiasm, and from which she probably borrowed much of the mythological allusion which somewhat ambitiously characterizes her poetry.[1] She was, however, well read in the Scriptures, the simplicity, sublimity, and comprehensiveness of which expanded her mind, and imparted their rhythm and elevation to her verses. She had married young; and repeated losses and

[1] Some of her classical embellishments she allowed she had taken from "little ordinary prints which hung in a shop window."

a numerous family had reduced her husband and herself, in the severe winter of 1783-4, to extreme distress. Her mother, her six children, and herself, who was on the eve of confinement, were perishing of starvation, at the moment when a benevolent inhabitant of Clifton discovered and supported them. The mother was in so weak a state that she died in the ecstasy of joy and surprise.

When Miss More had satisfied herself of the truth of Ann Yearsley's narrative, and the genuineness of her poetry, she immediately addressed Mrs. Montagu on the subject, requesting her aid in raising a subscription to enable her to publish the poems for the author's benefit. In her letter she says: "It is not intended to place her in such a state of independence as might seduce her to devote her time to the idleness of poetry. I hope she is convinced that the making of verses is not the great business of human life, and that, as a wife and a mother, she has duties to fill, the smallest of which is of more value than the finest verses she can write." The consequence of this appeal was upwards of one thousand subscribers to the first edition of the poems; and, at length, considerably more than 500*l.* was collected for the authoress. The money so raised was placed, by Mrs. Y.'s own consent, in the hands of trustees, and invested in the publick funds, for the use of herself and family. The sequel of the story is melancholy; and it is well for human nature that the name of Ann Yearsley can only be per-

petuated in conjunction with that of Hannah More. With her husband, she accepted an invitation from Miss More to supper, when her kind patroness informed her how the money was disposed. Immediately after supper, Mrs. Yearsley did not hesitate to accuse Miss More of envy and embezzlement. Astonished at this language, Hannah wished her good night, and told her that she would talk over the matter the next morning. In the presence of a gentleman of Bristol, the conversation was on the next day renewed; when the ungrateful woman did not hesitate to repeat her accusations of jealousy and fraud. Reason being now evidently useless, Miss More gave way. Ten guineas remained uninvested; Miss More presented her with these. The wretch immediately flung them at the head of her benefactress[1], whose meek and Christian reply must not here pass unrecorded: "May we never meet again till we meet in heaven!"

In forwarding to Mr. Alderman Cadell, who had invested the money, the receipts for the dividends, Miss More writes in a like strain of tranquil benevolence. "I shall promote this worthless woman's interests *with the same zeal*, but not the same pleasure. She defeats *my wish of keeping her baseness a secret* by telling it herself to every body.

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[1] This Mrs. Yearsley positively denied in the preface to a subsequent edition of her poems. The fact, however, with Hannah More's reply, rests upon the testimony of some of Mrs. More's earliest friends.

Be so good as hurry the new edition, and order two hundred down here to Mills as fast as possible, as there is really a just complaint against me for not having furnished the subscription."

No person whose opinion is of the smallest importance has ever ventured on any occasion to accuse Hannah More of the slightest malversation in this affair. It is, however, not a little surprising that any should be found to palliate the gross ingratitude of Mrs. Yearsley, who, not content with such outrages of decency and morality as that which has been mentioned, afterwards published her poems, accompanied with a preface bitterly reflecting on her patroness. She afterwards produced a tragedy, intituled "Earl Goodwin," which was acted on the Bath and Bristol boards. But though her productions, when her disadvantages are considered, were extraordinary, they seldom rose above that condition which the great master of the art declares to be forbidden to poetry.[1] Accordingly her play had little success. The history of the miserable creature is a striking comment on the Scripture declaration, "Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house."[2] With the money which her waywardness had wrested from its prudent and legitimate guardians, she established a circulating library at the Hot Wells. But her in-

[1] "——— mediocribus esse poëtis,
Non homines, non dî, non concessere columnæ."
Horat. Art. Poet. 372.

[2] Prov. xvii. 13.

gratitude was notorious, and she was shunned and discountenanced by all. She now began to find that even her poetical character was only relative, and that the publick estimate of her genius fell short of her own. Her two sons perished in the flower of their youth—one in battle, the other by disease; and, outcast, desolate, and broken-hearted, she retired to her native town of Melksham in Wilts, where, in 1806, she died insane and destitute.

As the poems of Ann Yearsley, or *Lactilla*, as was her *Parnassian* designation, are become scarce, and are unquestionably a curiosity, the reader may perhaps not deem it impertinent if this chapter is concluded by an extract from one of them, illustrative of a former narrative.

" Beneath this stack Louisa's dwelling rose;
Here the fair maniack bore three winters' snows;
Here long she shiver'd, stiffening in the blast!
The lightnings round their livid horrors cast;
The thunders roar, while rushing torrents pour,
And add new woes to bleak affliction's hour!
The heavens lour dismal, while the storm descends:
No mother's bosom the soft maid befriends;
But fright'ned o'er the wilds she swiftly flies,
And, drench'd with rains, the roofless haystack tries.
The morn was fair, and gentle ——[1] sought
These lonely woodlands, friends to sober thought.
With solitude the slow-pac'd maid is seen
Tread the dark grove and unfrequented green.
Well ——[1] knew their lurkings: Phœbus shone,—
While, musing, she pursued the track alone.

[1] Hannah; or Stella, as Miss More was then poetically styled by Mrs. Y.

O thou kind friend! whom here I dare not name,
Who to Louisa's shed of misery came;
Lur'd by the tale, sighed o'er her beauteous form,
And gently drew her from the beating storm;—
Stand forth,— defend, for well thou canst, the cause
Of heaven, and justify its rigid laws.
Yet own that human laws are harshly giv'n,
When they extend beyond the will of heav'n.
Say can thy pen for that hard duty plead,
By which the meek and helpless maid's decreed
To dire seclusion,— snatch'd from guiltless joys,
To where corroding grief the frame destroys?
Monastick glooms, which active virtue cramp,
Where horrid silence chills the vital lamp?
Slowly and faint the languid pulses beat,
And the chill'd heart forgets its genial heat;
The dim sunk eye with hopeless glance explores
The solemn aisles and death-denouncing doors,
Ne'er to be pass'd again;— now heaves the sigh,
Now unavailing sorrows fill the eye.
Fancy once more brings back the long-lost youth
To the fond soul, in all the charms of truth:
She welcomes the lov'd image. Busy thought
Pourtrays the past with guiltless pleasures fraught;—
'Tis momentary bliss, 'tis rapture high,—
The heart o'erflows, and all is ecstacy!
Memory, I charge thee, yet preserve the shade:
Ah, let not yet the glittering colours fade!
Forbear the cruel future yet to view,
When the sad soul must bid a long adieu
E'en to its fancied bliss.—Ah! turn not yet,
Thou wretched bankrupt! that must soon forget
This farewell draught of joy! Lo! fancy dies!
E'en the thin phantom of past pleasure flies!
Thought sinks in real wo; too poor to give
Her present bliss, she bids the future live:
The spirit soon quits that fond clasp; for, see!
The future offers finished misery:
Hope quite extinct, — lo! frantick through the aisle
She raves, while superstition grimly smiles;

The exhausted mourner mopes, then wildly stalks
Round the drear dome, and seeks the darkest walks;
The glance distracted each sad sister meets;
The sorrow-speaking eye in silence greets
Each death-devoted maid. Louisa here
Runs through each various shape of sad despair;
Now swells with gusts of hope, now, sickening, dies;
Alternate thoughts of death and life arise
Within her panting soul; the firm resolve,
The new desire, in stronger fears dissolve;
She starts; then, seized the moment of her fate,
Quits the lone cloister, and the horrid grate;
Whilst wilder horrors to receive her wait.
Muffled on freedom's happy plains they stand,
And eager seize her not reluctant hand.
Too late to these mild shores the mourner came;
For now the guilt of fright o'erwhelms her frame;
Her broken vows in wild disorder roll,
And stick like serpents in her trembling soul.
Thought! what art thou? of thee she boasts no more;
O'erwhelm'd thou diest amid the wilder roar
Of lawless anarchy, which sweeps the soul;
Whilst her drown'd faculties, like pebbles, roll,
Unloos'd, uptorn, by whirlwinds of despair;
Each well-taught moral now dissolves in air;
Dishevelled even her beauteous tresses fly,
And the wild glance now fills the starting eye;
The balls fierce glaring in their orbits move;
(Bright spheres, where beamed the sparkling fires of love,)
Now roam for objects which once filled her mind;
Ah! long-lost objects they must never find!
Ill-starr'd Louisa! Memory! 'tis a strain
Which fills my soul with sympathetick pain;
Remembrance, hence! give thy vain struggles o'er,
Nor swell the line with forms that live no more."

SEAT IN THE GROUNDS AT MENDIP LODGE, SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN DEDICATED TO HANNAH MORE.

I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work. *John*, ix. 4.

CHAPTER IV.

THE beloved Evangelist, in recording the miracle wherein the Saviour first "manifested forth" that "glory" which abode in him, adds, with a simplicity which no *Christian* can well misinterpret, "and his disciples *believed* in him." That they "believed in him" before, in the *ordinary* sense of the word, is sufficiently implied in the fact that they were his disciples: they had, indeed, acknowledged him in terms to be "the Christ," "Him of

whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write," "the Son of God," "the King of Israel."[1] But there was yet a higher and more intimately spiritual sense in which they had not believed; the truth was, indeed, demonstrated to their *understandings*, but it yet required a different character of evidence to impress it on their *souls*. He whose eye beheld Nathanael beneath the fig-tree before Philip called him, gave no higher proof of his exalted character when He afterwards disposed at will the elements of nature; omniscience is as true a demonstration of divinity as omnipotence. Yet the proof, although not higher, was more constraining and effective; its influence was not modified by the mental constitution of the disciples; of *all* it is said without exception, that they "believed on him." It was now for the first time that they acknowledged the constant presence, the sovereign influence, the exclusive and infinite moment, of spiritual concerns.

The case of the Apostles is one of no infrequent occurrence in the records of Christian experience. Many true disciples, many who acknowledge Christ from the heart as "the Son of God," and "the King of Israel," many who admit the demonstrations of a Paley and a Butler as conclusive and indisputable, — and who, as every thoughtful Christian must do, acknowledge the Bible their rule of faith and of practice, and offer from the heart the daily homage of prayer and thanks-

[1] John i. 41, 45, 49.

giving, — have yet, in a sublimer sense, to believe. But at length Christ "manifests forth his glory." Some remarkable dispensation of Providence, which can add, indeed, nothing to previous demonstration, impresses, however, the soul with more vivid conceptions of eternal realities. The velocity of time, the uncertainty of life, the mutability of our earthly condition, become no longer the deductions of speculation, but the convictions of the senses. Acknowledged truths assume their legitimate proportion and influence in the thoughts. Belief attains a more solemn and spiritual elevation. This effect is not unfrequently the result of disappointments, of betrayed or ill-requited affections, and of personal suffering; but the death of those with whom we have been long associated in habits of friendship or sociability is commonly the most unequivocal and most effectual "manifestation" by which disciples "believe."

In the instance of Hannah More, the loss of Garrick appears to have been the "manifestation." It affected her with that profound and ever-present conviction of the inestimable value of time, in reference to the objects of eternity, which afterwards accomplished, by the hands of a secluded and sickly female, results of the most extraordinary magnitude; enabling her to instruct, with effect so electrick, at once the saloons of Westminster and the hovels of the Mendip villages, in the same one thing needful for the prince and the peasant. In her "Sensibility," the reference to Garrick's death is brief but touching:

" Tho' time his mellowing hand across has stole,
Softening the tints of sorrow on the soul,
The deep impression long my heart shall fill,
And every fainter trace be perfect still."

This anticipation was fully realized in after life. That Hannah was a "disciple" before this event, and had been, even from infancy, is unquestionable. Her pen, active almost from childhood, had been exclusively employed on the side of holiness and truth; the stage, when it spoke by her voice, commended the gravest lessons of moral wisdom to the world; and her most trifling productions were never deficient in reference to those principles by which her heart and her conduct were habitually controlled. She had, however, given better proofs of discipleship even than these. Mingling extensively in the world of gaiety, and one of the most conspicuous objects of its adulation, she mingled with none of its vices, none of its dissipations; she had even courage to rebuke them, and yet tact and modesty, young as she was, to rebuke without offence. The Sabbath she inflexibly and inviolably kept holy; no artifices or solicitations could prevail on her to abandon her calm and sacred seclusion for the most brilliant Sunday evening party which the wit and information of the metropolis could assemble. But, although a genuine and a devout Christian, she had not yet been animated to the full development of the powers she inherited for the amelioration of her species. The death of Garrick stamped on her mind the true character of all human fame; — even of the noblest, — that

which attends the exertion of the intellectual powers. She had been accustomed to regard him, in the enchanted mirror of youthful fancy, as a creature of more than human mould; and the familiarity of personal friendship, and the influence of riper years, while they qualified the romance of her views, endued them with the elevation and stability which belongs to the calm convictions of reason. To know that the day must come when genius so bright, when accomplishments so splendid, must utterly perish, and leave their possessor the equal of the meanest clown, except so far as his devotion of the "ten talents" might have been more faithful and profitable, was a solemn consideration; but what was it to know that the day *had* come! The soulless tabernacle of one who had so long been the admiration of civilized mankind was a spectacle well calculated to suggest the only true and abiding use of intellectual endowments — the glory of the great creative Mind. The feelings of Hannah More on this occasion are drawn by her own expressive pen, in the letter which has already been cited in a note, as containing the particulars of her first interview with Mrs. Garrick after the solemn occurrence. "I went," she says, "yesterday with the Wilmots to pay a visit to the coffin. The last time the same party met in the room was—*to see him perform Macbeth!* He changed so soon that he was obliged to be soldered up. What would I have given for a sight of his face! Yet, as it was, there was room for meditation till the mind burst with thinking.

His new house is not so pleasant as Hampton, nor so splendid as the Adelphi; but it is commodious enough for all the wants of the inhabitant. Besides, it is so quiet, that he never will be disturbed till the eternal morning; and never till then will a sweeter voice than his be heard." From this moment Hannah More appears to have resolved on the entire dedication of all her mental powers and acquirements, of all her influence, her time, her efforts, to the attainment of a crown which should not wither on her tomb.

The mode of executing her determination was, probably, not immediately decided. The demands of piety and friendship alike drew her at first to the side of Mrs. Garrick, and this circumstance afforded her the advantage of sufficient retirement to meditate and mature her plans. While a more solemn cast pervades her writings at this period, we may observe also a more inquisitive and active beneficence. The cases of Ann Yearsley and the afflicted Louisa enabled her to ascertain the powerful influence which her popularity with the great empowered her to wield, and thus induced and encouraged her to discover to what ends she might most beneficially direct it.

All this, however, required reflection; and, as she wisely judged, reflection consecrated and enlightened by prayer. To this object immediate retirement was indispensable. She did not now think herself permitted to indulge so extensively in the pleasures of literary and refined society,

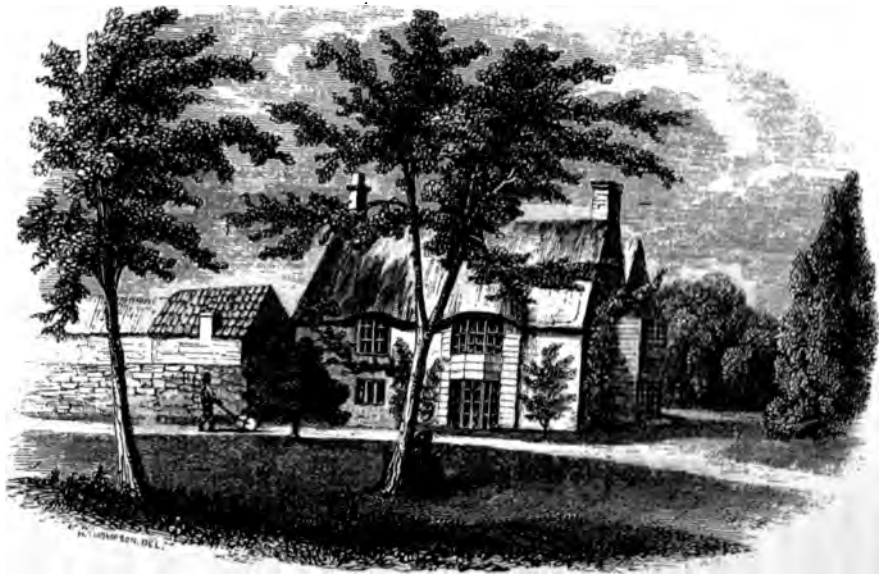
which, however pure and excellent in themselves, must necessarily interfere with the prosecution of those designs which she rightly felt herself the chosen instrument to accomplish. Sought after as her society was, no retreat within a tolerably accessible reach of the metropolis would have afforded her the desired seclusion. She therefore fixed her abode in the parish of Wrington, about two miles from the village; a place at that time regarded at a formidable distance from London, and which no post even from Bristol visited.

While regret and astonishment pervaded the circles of which she had been so long the admiration and the delight,—while her resolves were successively assailed by inconsiderate ridicule and officious kindness,—while all the allurements which the present world contained for her were spread to reverse her determination — and while none could better estimate than herself the surrender she had made, — with the voice of friendship and regret sounding in her ears, like her own "inflexible" hero, who

> "Dimovit obstantes propinquos,
> Et populum reditus morantem [1],"

she put aside all obstacles, and hastened to her hermitage. Her motives, perhaps, were as little comprehended as those of the inexorable Roman; and there were some who, not improbably, regarded her exchange of courtly celebrity for rustick

[1] Hor. iii. Carm. v. 51.



COWSLIP GREEN.

shade as scarcely less extraordinary a sacrifice than that of Regulus himself. They wore for a season the roses which have long mingled with their dust;—her amarant blossoms in eternity.

If the retired locality of Cowslip Green afforded her the opportunities she desired of communing with herself in meditation, and with her God in prayer, and the study of his revealed will, it was not less favourable to the contemplation of Nature, in that tranquil, tender, and cheerful mood, in which, as in the whisper in Horeb, her Author's voice is rather wont to be perceived and recognized than in the more imposing forms of whirlwind, earthquake, and tempest, which agitate her bolder scenes. The cottage, except by the growth of the trees then planted, is little altered from its appearance in 1785, when Miss More first took possession of it. It is only one story high; the roof is thatch: a smooth lawn, with a few shrubs and trees, fronts the window of the drawing-room, which looks towards the south. A border of flowers runs nearly round the walls. Situate in the midst of the bright and fertile vale of Wrington, Cowslip Green commands a variety of exquisite views. On one side of the lawn rises the abrupt hill on which the noble mansion of Aldwick Court has since been erected. To the south spreads the rich and sylvan valley, bounded by the dark outline of the Mendips, with their warm-tinted herbage and dusky woods, casting out in bold relief the picturesque village of Blagdon, and the

"magick garden"[1] of Mendip Lodge, with its noble terraces of

> "Shade above shade, a woody theatre
> Of stateliest view;"[1]

while between them the cottage roofs and venerable tower of Burrington shelter in the leafy skirts of their bold and rocky coomb.

In this small but tasteful cottage nothing was wanting to adorn and improve the active and holy leisure of its gifted inhabitant. Her little library was augmented by the sedulous contributions of friends, anxious not only that she should bear to her retreat some memorial of their affection, but that she might still continue, though at a distance from the resorts of wit and learning, to commune largely with the wise and intelligent. And her writings, even during this period of grave meditation, evince that she saw no inconsistency between the devoutest piety and the cultivation of elegant literature and taste. The poems of "Florio" and "Bas-bleu," published in the year subsequent to her settlement at Cowslip Green, lively, brilliant, and abounding with knowledge of "fashion-

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[1] Is that a magick garden, on the edge
Of Mendip hung? even so it seems to gleam.
Bowles' Days Departed, or Banwell Hill.

The builder of this beautiful mansion (the late Rev. Dr. Whalley) was the early and steady friend of Hannah More, and one of the seats in his grounds was consecrated to her name; which that was is not accurately known, but from the situation of that represented in the vignette at the head of this chapter (immediately facing Cowslip Green) it is probable that this was the seat in question.

[2] Par. Lost, iv. 139.

able life," were as universally admired by the classes for whose benefit they were written, as though they had not been the production of one who was singular enough to think there were in time and eternity objects preferable to their continual society. The former of these, dedicated to Horace Walpole, was a great favourite with that eminent arbiter of fashion and virtù; and the latter was styled by Dr. Johnson "a very great performance."[1] And while the poems themselves are replete with every grace of diction and style, they also distinctly track the channel of the writer's studies, who was evidently imbibing at that time, with no undiminished fervour, the pure streams of Latian and classick English lore. So unjust to religion is the opinion that it cannot consist with intellectual cultivation, of which it is indeed the parent and the nurse. It was during the last five years of her life that Mrs. More gave a striking exemplification of her views on this subject. She had been reading Shakspeare, in whose writings she intensely delighted, when a Calvinistick friend, to whom she made some observation on the subject, replied, "No book for me but the book of Christ."[2] Mrs. More immediately rejoined, "All

[1] "Miss More has written a poem called 'Le Bas-bleu,' which is, in my opinion, a very great performance. It wanders about in manuscript, and surely will soon find its way to Bath."

Piozzi's Anecdotes.

[2] In her moral sketches ("High Profession," &c., Works, vol. iv. p. 326.) Mrs. More has the following remarks on persons of this description:—"The persons in question have little turn

cannot be so moral as you." When it is remembered with what supreme reverence Mrs. More regarded "the book of Christ,"—how diligently she studied it,—how unreservedly she submitted her whole course of life to its guidance and authority,—how truly religion was the soul of her life,—the force of the rebuke will need no comment. The position here reproved differs indeed from that of the Caliph Omar, as the Bible differs from the Koran; but in its hostility to literature it differs not. The Alexandrian library would have met no better fate from the Christian devotee than from the Mohammedan. But the accomplishments of Hannah More were not merely agreeable recreations. She had learned from "the book of Christ," and from the example of one of its most illustrious penmen, how valuable an instrument is human learning for recommending, diffusing, and impressing the truths of God. She made it bear its part in the great work to which her mind and

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for books. Might it not usefully fill many a vacant gap, were they to devote a little of their leisure to *rational reading*? There is much valuable literature which occupies a large intermediate space between strictly religious and frothy books. History, well chosen travels, select biographical works,—furnish not only harmless but profitable reading. The study of these would improve their views, and, by expanding their minds, furnish them with topicks for general conversation and useful reflection. It would enlarge their charity, by letting them see that many authors are not wicked, though they do not always confine their works to religious discussion." "Such books might correct their taste, without deducting any thing from their stock of piety, except perhaps the phrases which disfigure it; would give them a relish for better society, and thus turn their waste moments to some profit."

efforts were dedicated,—His glory. Even in the slight fugitive pieces just mentioned, this object is never lost out of sight. Religious principle, as directing the actions of life and the intercourse of speech, is the centre and spirit of these poems. The feelings of Florio, on his settlement in the country, seem unconsciously traced from her own experience of city tumult and rural retirement:

> "A thousand cheerful thoughts arise;
> Each rural scene enchants his eyes;
> With transport he begins to look
> On Nature's all-instructive book;
> No objects now seem mean or low
> Which point to HIM from whom they flow.
> A berry or a bud excites
> A chain of reasoning which delights,
> Which, spite of sceptick ebullitions,
> Proves Atheists not the best logicians.
> A tree, a brook, a blade of grass,
> Suggests reflections as they pass,
> Till Florio, with a sigh, confest,
> The simplest pleasures are the best!
> Bellario's systems sink in air;
> He feels the perfect, good, and fair;
> As pious Celia rais'd the theme
> To holy faith and love supreme,
> Enlighten'd Florio learn'd to trace
> In Nature's God the God of Grace."

While Miss More was as warm an advocate of elegant literature and severe science as those who profess to see in these things all that is necessary to the regeneration of mankind, she could not discover their power to transform and renew a vitiated moral nature. She had seen numerous cases where these objects had been cultivated with the utmost assiduity, but where the heart still retained its corruptions; and in instances where

mental and spiritual cultivation were combined, she could as invariably trace the precious ore to purer veins than those of philosophy. It may be doubted whether, at this period of her life, the publick mind was quite prepared to endure the notion of a national seminary from which religion in every shape was to be studiously, formally, and avowedly excluded; such a project would, doubtless, have been no less startling to many than the proposal that every individual should burn his Bible.[1] But a Bible unread is as useless as a Bible burnt; and an education *merely professing* to include religion is no better, though more decent, than an openly unchristian university.[2] How far this real neglect of religion in the instruction of youth, while homage was externally paid to the principle of a religious education, may have ultimately contributed to the rise of institutions explicitly discarding Christianity from their notice,

[1] It is instructive in these days to the political philosopher who does not hold the records of history to be waste paper, to be reminded that the *Atheists* of France recommended *Schools without religion*. M. Manuel, in his letter to the National Convention, (1793) writes: "*No* religion must be taught in Schools which are to be *National* ones. *To prescribe one, would be to prefer it to all others*." The course of our narrative will compel the resumption of this subject presently.

[2] What would have been Mrs. More's opinion of such an institution may be inferred from some observations of her own, for which see Appendix (V.) It may be here remarked as curious that Socrates, or (more properly, perhaps,) Plato, has pronounced the gravest rebuke on the dissociation of human learning from religious wisdom:—Κινδυνεύει τό γε τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιστημῶν κτῆμα, ἐαν τις ἄνευ ΤΟΥ ΒΕΛΤΙΣΤΟΥ κεκτημένος ᾖ, ὀλίγακις μὲν ὠφελεῖν, βλάπτειν δὲ τὰ πλείω, τὸν ἔχοντα αὐτό."—*Alcibiades*, ii. cap. 6.

belongs not to this work to consider: it may, however, suggest to those who perceive the connection, that a Christianity which *contents* itself with forms, will soon be contented without them. But the evil, undoubtedly, was widely prevalent. The education of the higher class of females has been already noticed; while, however, that of the other sex was, unquestionably, more rational and more intellectual, and the forms of religion were regularly observed in schools, little care was taken to imbue the youthful heart with its practical and vital principles. And it is, perhaps, no extravagantly violent supposition, that our teeth may at this moment be set on edge by that sour grape eaten by our fathers; and the ignorance of the Scriptures, and of ecclesiastical antiquity,—the rash conclusions carried into precipitate practice,—the wild vagaries of opinion,—the heresy, schism, infidelity, and folly which characterize an age unrivalled no less in these things than in its arrogant self-sufficiency and intellectual pretension, may be partly traced, without any excessive improbability, to the cold and formal inculcation, in our schools, some half century ago, of the vital and energetick Christianity of the Church of England.

While the education of the higher stations was thus imperfectly administered, maxims equally pernicious to the lower were no less implicitly received: maxims which, to the disgrace of our boasted advancement, are not wholly extinct at the present day. It was forgotten that the very principle of Protestantism claims the Bible as each

human being's indefeasible heritage; and persons who never dreamed of relinquishing the appellation of Protestant seemed to lose sight of the obvious fact, that the possession of a Bible to one who could not read it was a right scarcely worth any very strenuous contention. Some undefinable connection, which reason is not very forward to allow or perceive, between the mere capability of reading and insubordination to a man's temporal superiors, had nevertheless become extensively acknowledged; and disbelief in its existence was by some almost regarded as infidelity. The instruction of the poor in those truths and duties which are as much their concern as that of the prince was blindly confounded with that spurious knowledge which "puffeth up,"[1] (now facetiously called "useful" for ploughboys and journeymen,) and which reaction on this false maxim has so extensively generated. It seemed assumed that the poor man's practice of his duty would bear an inverse proportion to his knowledge of it.[2] "He might learn enough at church," was the common reply to all objectors; but it was forgotten that he who could read his Bible at home also, would at once be better disposed for his church, and better enabled to derive from its services and its pulpit the blessings which each was respectively adapted to dispense. It was to the prevalence of such views that Eng-

[1] See 2 Cor. viii. 1.

[2] Mrs. Jones's dialogue with Farmer Hoskins in "The Sunday School" is a representation of an every-day scene in those times.—See Works, vol. iii. p. 303.

land owed a peasantry easily misled by the arts of spiritual quacks and seducers; — an unoccupied soil, where, "while men slept," the enemy could readily sow his tares. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, active from the earliest days of its existence, had done much to counteract the mischief, by the establishment, so early as the year 1700, of parochial schools; and the colossal efforts of the National Society, now educating upwards of half a million of children in the communion of our church, have done much more. Yet, while opposition to the education of the poor systematically prevailed, little, comparatively, could be effected; and England, to this day, in her lower, as in her higher society, is suffering the consequence of neglected or inadequate religious education.

This condition of the national education could scarcely, under any circumstances, have escaped the active and acute observation of Miss More. But there existed, in her case, especial causes to determine her energies in this direction. Educated herself as an immortal and accountable being, and employed, almost in childhood, in the prosecution of the same great work for others, the prevalent absence of religious training which she everywhere saw impressed her by its very contrast. In this, and truly, she believed she could perceive the real cause of that practical infidelity which pervaded the upper walks of life, and of the savage profligacy which too generally disgraced the lower. Vast as the attempt might seem to compass a national reformation, she felt that a consequence no

less mighty was involved in a purified education of the young. Here the object was, at least, definite; the principle, simple. Here then it was that Hannah More appeared to find the platform she desired for the erection of the powerful enginery by which, as a mental Archimedes, she was to move the world of morals. Her plans of beneficence took a wide range; she knew that to effect much she must aim at more; and it does not appear that she bounded her views of spiritual improvement by any narrower limits than those of the whole British Islands. In regard to temporal circumstances, she certainly drew no boundary. The palace, the mansion, the farm, the cottage, were equally the objects of her Christian ambition. She resolved to concentrate all her endowments and all her energies on an object at once worthy her best exertions, and for which her opportunities and habits had peculiarly adapted her. In the country, her pen had leisure to instruct the rich and fashionable; while the rustick labourer, to whom the pen could win no access, was within the reach of personal instruction. From this time, therefore, Hannah More appears in a higher character than the idol of coteries, and the toast of literary adorers. She is the fearless and eloquent prophetess, — careless of personal consequences while true to her commission and her duty; — the Cassandra, who, however discredited, ridiculed, opposed, calumniated, still is found unmoved in her high vocation—the inculcation of THE TRUTH.

THE OLD SCHOOL-HOUSE, CHEDDAR.

"Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world; both high and low, rich and poor, together. My mouth shall speak of wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding."—*Ps.* xlix. 1—3.

CHAPTER V.

THE summer of 1787 was almost wholly spent by *Mrs.* More (for about this time she adopted this alteration of her style) at Cowslip Green; and here she constructed her first methodical battery on vice and error, under the title of "Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society." She had associated freely with this class of the community, and was therefore sufficiently acquainted with their habits and practices

to treat them fully and correctly. As the most influential portion of society, the reformation of this class was, in general, the most important to the purification of the national morals. "Reformation" (she truly remarks) "*must* begin with the great, or it will never be effectual. *Their* example is the fountain whence the vulgar draw their habits, actions, and characters. To expect to reform the poor, while the opulent are corrupt, is to throw odours into the stream, while the springs are poisoned."[1] In 1788, the work appeared anonymously. She appears to have been apprehensive that the publication of her name might have subjected her to invidious charges, which, though contemptible in themselves, might have impaired the influence of those arguments which she wished to make their impression by their native force. The book was frequently canvassed in Mrs. More's presence; and, once, while dining at a party at Mrs. Garrick's, she was abruptly asked by a noble guest, whether she could conjecture who the author was? to whom, with great promptitude and self-possession, she replied, "Whoever it may be, I doubt not the writer was in earnest." But the authoress did not long remain unknown. Although not prefixing her name to the work, she made no

[1] Thoughts on the Manners of the Great, (Works, vol. xi. p. 56.) The same truth is observed by Cicero, (de Legg. iii. 14.) "Licet videre, si velis replicare memoriam temporum, qualescunque summi civitatis viri fuerunt, talem civitatem fuisse; quæcunque mutatio morum in principibus exstiterit, eandem in populo sequuturam."

secret of the authorship among private friends; and internal evidence betrayed the truth to many who were otherwise unacquainted with it. It is said that one of the earliest to pierce the disguise was the most illustrious lady of the day, on whom the work made a serious impression. Much to the credit of the fashionable people of that period, Mrs. More, by this step, lost none of her popularity. The malevolence or misconception excited in some quarters was far more than compensated by the admiration which the work produced in others, and by the reflection which it had aroused in all. Seven large editions were sold in a few months, the second in little more than a week, and the third of them in *four hours!* A book so universally read could not fail to be influential, and its influence was soon traceable in the abandonment of many of the customs which it attacked. The elaborate hairdressing which employed incalculable hands during the sabbath services of the church soon altogether disappeared, the example being set in the highest quarter; the perquisite of card-money rapidly diminished; the Christian master no longer pleaded for the practice of employing his servant to tell conventional falsehoods; and Sunday concert-parties of sacred musick, even if unobjectionable in themselves, were seen to produce a large proportion of evil by the necessary desecration of the sabbath on the part of coachmen and servants. For all these improvements, society is very mainly indebted to the pen of Hannah More.

With some it may, perhaps, be matter of surprise

that, in this her first work on national reformation, Mrs. More should strike rather at practices than principles; since none was more entirely convinced than she that principle was the only perennial fountain of practice; and that, principles once corrected, practice would, of necessity, be purified. But she did not act without her reasons. The errors which she sought to amend proceeded rather from averseness to the entertainment of the principle than from deliberate resistance to its authority; and this absence of reflection would have denied an audience to a treatise on speculative principles of conduct, however they might be sanctioned. In practices, however, there was somewhat tangible. These might be exposed in a manner at once clear and interesting to those who had thoughtlessly indulged them. The removal of the evil practice was in itself no unimportant good; and the transition from the practice to the principle was less abrupt than the immediate inculcation of the latter. It is nature's order of reformation. The weeds must be extracted before the seed is sown.

> "Virtus est vitium fugere, et sapientia *prima*
> Stultitiâ caruisse."[1]

It is, moreover, the scriptural and providential order. "Cease to do evil," precedes "learn to do well."[2] "Legality precedes morality in every individual, even as the Jewish dispensation preceded the Christian in the education of the world

[1] Horat. lib. i. epist. i. 41.

[2] Is. i. 16, 17.

at large."[1] The "Thoughts on the Manners of the Great" were only a portion of an entire work (itself forming a department of her scheme for general religious reformation) which was afterwards completed by an essay intituled "An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World."

While occupied with this task, her imagination was not idle, and was equally consecrated to the same great object,—the cause of truth, religion, and charity. About this period she had begun to cultivate a stricter intimacy with the eminent Mr. Wilberforce, and to form the acquaintance of the Rev. John Newton, rector of St. Mary's, Coleman Street, London. The latter, in early life, had been successively the servant of a slave trader, and the mate and master of a slave ship, and was thus enabled to confirm the facts respecting negro slavery, which the senator was then urging with all the zeal of humanity, and all the might of eloquence, upon the indignant notice of the British legislature. In Bristol, too, Mrs. More had possessed frequent opportunities of information on the subject. She had even seen, as she informs us in a note to her poem, the chains and torturing instruments employed to coerce the slaves on their voyage. The inhuman commerce thus brought before her in all the horrible minuteness of detail and glow of declamatory description, Mrs. More felt it her duty to use her influence against it. She accordingly composed a poem, called "The Black Slave

[1] Coleridge, in Southey's Omniana.

Trade," which was published in 1788. As on misconception could here mar the influence of her name, which was considerable, it was not published, like the "Thoughts," anonymously. The precise effect which this poem produced in the advancement of the good work is not easy to assign: many other causes were concurrent in the same happy direction. It was, however, highly commended by the bishops and influential clergy; and it was widely circulated and eminently popular.

Up to the year 1789[1], Mrs. More, whose literary and distinguished acquaintance was now become commensurate with every name entitled to those designations, combined her rural solitude with occasional visits to importunate friends, and rambles through the picturesque neighbourhood of her dwelling, extending that term to fifteen or twenty miles from home. Such relaxations, indispensable to a mind always propense to overwork an infirm frame, never withdrew it from its watch-tower. They enabled her, on the contrary, to treasure up many valuable facts and hints, and to prepare her friends to countenance and advance her plans of philanthropy.

It was in one of these rural excursions that Providence opened to her "a great door and effectual" for the prosecution of her benevolent designs, as regards a large and important portion

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1 It was in this year, that, during a sojourn with Bishop Porteus at Fulham, Mrs. More composed the amusing trifle intituled "Bonner's Ghost," which was printed by Horace Walpole, with all the elegance and luxury of the Strawberry Hill press.

of society. The romantick and grotesque cliffs at Cheddar, about ten miles from Cowslip Green, were then, as now, the resort of pleasure-parties for many miles round. The wild and solemn character of the scene,—the sunless hollow between the leafless rocks,— the caverns yawning beside the path, and the quaint forms overhanging it, where some giant chisel appears to have broken the vast material into the rudiments of ecclesiastical architecture,— found their parallel in a population no less rude and peculiar. Although events of which we are about to speak have produced a material alteration in the condition of the Cheddar peasantry, some traces of their former barbarism are still in existence. It is not more than four years since that the writer visited the last surviving inhabitant of *a cave* in the Cheddar cliffs. The abode, far better adapted for a sepulchre than a dwelling, extended a considerable distance into the rock. A narrow fissure served to carry off the smoke, while the inner part of the cavern, ceiled with stalactite, was on every side dripping with damps. A rough wooden door, rudely following the outline of the cavern's mouth, was the only protection against external violence. In this habitation a human being had existed for upwards of thirty years. This woman, wild and squalid as her dwelling, was only an individual of a class, who, though inhabiting more humanized abodes, were neither less ignorant nor less barbarous. Females, whom nothing but their female garb could associate

in the traveller's mind with an idea of the sex, hung on his path at every step, vending the mineral productions of the country and the seeds of "the Cheddar pink,"—offering their assistance to exhibit the most interesting points, and recount the tales and traditions connected with them,—and not unfrequently, engaging in furious and even sanguinary contention, when any of the unsightly sisterhood appeared to have been more successful in such attempts than the rest. This class, of which some few samples remain at present, was, at the time of Mrs. More's first visit to Cheddar, little worse than a specimen of its humbler population. Here, then, appeared a field amply requiring the exertion of those powers which she had retired to cultivate and apply. Yet it might well seem calculated to bid defiance to any agency short of miracle. But Hannah More remembered that the blessing of God, even when not miraculously visible, may yet be effectively present; and in prayerful reliance on Him who can turn the wilderness to the garden of the Lord, she reflected what human measures would be most likely to succeed, resolving, "in the power of His might," to adopt whatever an enlightened conscience might approve, with steady courage and with vigorous promptitude.

Providence had prepared the way for this great work, by blessing the assiduity of the Misses More with an ample competence. They had already built a house in Great Pulteney Street, Bath, and,

in January 1790, they retired from the labour of tuition to take possession of it. From this time, Cowslip Green, and the house in Bath, became the common property of all the sisters, who resided alternately at each. Hannah met with a ready cooperation in all her views from these excellent relatives, whom she now regarded as her chief instruments in compassing the mighty results to which she aspired. In particular, the youngest, Martha, entered warmly into the scheme; and now no time was lost in commencing operations.

On revisiting Cheddar, Mrs. More's first inquiry regarded the spiritual superintendence of the people; which was, undoubtedly, lamentably defective. The vicar, an aged man, was not in residence, nor was there any resident curate; no clergyman had resided in the parish for forty years. Two weekly services and one sermon was the whole amount of pastoral care enjoyed by the inhabitants of Cheddar; and the attendance of twenty persons at these was a full congregation. It can scarcely be necessary to inform the reader that the laws of the Church of England, if properly enforced, would have remedied this grievous abuse; but the parishioners were too deeply sunk in ignorance and profligacy to be sensible of any existing grievance, and were well contented to remain undisturbed by the topicks of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." They did not, it seems, according to the theory advocated by the patrons of a "voluntary church," go in quest of those religious privileges which a little

exertion and scarcely any expense would have infallibly enabled them to realize. Instances like these are the best arguments against visionary projects. The evidence of experiment is irresistible: the weight of one fact is enough to crush a host of pismire hypotheses. The provisions of an established church were suspended at Cheddar, and the consequence was barbarism and paganism. Nor is there any thing so distinct in the moral constitution of the Somersetshire people as to make us conclude that the experiment would produce in other places a different result. The destruction of the church establishment for the substitution of a "voluntary system" would only make a Cheddar of the entire kingdom.

As there was no probability that Mrs. More could either prevail on the vicar of Cheddar to tend his charge more carefully, or on the parishioners to present him in the bishop's court,—and as little could be hoped at once from the adult generation; the only practicable course was evident: — the instruction of the children. The benefits of parochial week-day schools, originated by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, had been long apparent; and the idea of Sunday schools had a few years before been so successfully realized by the benevolent Mr. Raikes of Gloucester, that, at the time of which we are now treating, not fewer than 250,000 poor children were receiving instruction in those establishments. It was, probably, his example that reminded Mrs. More of the possibility of connecting a private

school with the publick provisions of the church.[1] But the idea was still more likely to have arisen from the schools already established by Mrs. Trimmer, whose character and labours bear a close

[1] Hardy assertors have not shrunk from the affirmation that Mr. Raikes was a Dissenter, and that the Dissenters were the first originators of Sunday Schools. Among the many obligations of the cause of truth to that noble Christian institution, the Bath Church of England Lay Association, is the refutation of this falsehood in a shape to preclude the possibility of its revival. Sir William Cockburn, a leading and active member of that zealous body, actually addressed the Rev. H. Raikes upon the subject, and read, at the last meeting of the association, the following reply:—

"Dear Sir,

"I have great pleasure in replying to your inquiries, as I can reply most explicitly, and most confidently.

"My venerated uncle, Robert Raikes, was not only a member of the Church of England throughout the *whole of* his life, but he was also a most attached and devoted one.

"I should much doubt whether he *ever* entered a single place of worship unconnected with the Establishment, and he was uniform in his attendance at his parish church on Sundays, frequent in his attendance at the early prayers in the Cathedral on week days.

"His memory is still cherished by some of the oldest inhabitants of Gloucester, who would remember that though his mind overflowed with charity and good will to men of *all* denominations, his affections and allegiance were *wholly* with the Church of England.

"Yours truly,

"Chester, Jan. 1, 1838." H. Raikes."

This is very decisive; and it may serve as a proof of the recklessness of party, that the assertion here denied could ever have been made in the face of the facts, that Mr. Raikes's first coadjutor was a *clergyman*, and the first place to which the children were brought was *the cathedral*.

affinity to those of Hannah More. The Sunday schools in Old Brentford had been opened in 1786; about three years before. They were connected with the church, though a private charity; and had even then reclaimed from vice, idleness, and savage ignorance, many hundreds of poor children. They had been principally raised by the exertions and contributions of ladies, acting, however, in concert with the incumbent, the Rev. Charles Sturges, vicar of Ealing, with whom the plan originated. These schools had been followed up by the institution of schools of industry; and their success must have been known to Mrs. More, as they were not only in high repute through the patronage of the Queen, but they were described, together with many others of like character, in Mrs. Trimmer's admirable manual of practical benevolence, "The Economy of Charity;" a work addressed to ladies, with which it is impossible to suppose Mrs. More unacquainted; nor could she have been unimpressed by its simple eloquence of plain facts and clear deductions. It is, indeed, highly probable that Mrs. More had inspected these establishments herself; having been, as has been mentioned, on a recent visit to Bishop Porteus, who was a friend of Mrs. Trimmer, as well as a warm promoter of her schools; and whose palace is situate in a neighbouring parish. But, though the connection of a private school with the parish church was manifestly feasible, there were, at Cheddar, formidable impediments.

Much could not be expected from the patronage

of the vicar: still Mrs. More would not disconnect her school from the church; for she would not do evil that good might come, and create a permanent schism for the purpose of producing a temporary reformation. The farmers also, and petty landlords, though apparently an inert mass, careless of every thing but their own ease and brutal enjoyments, would, she well knew, kindle into fiery opposition at the contact of religion; while the very parties whose benefit was chiefly contemplated would, of themselves, be the last to seek, or even to accept it.

The first thing to be done was to disarm the hostility of the petty landholders; and this our heroine, as she may be most strictly called, now set out to do in person, although in weak and delicate health, and the autumn far advanced. On inquiry at Cheddar, it appeared that the principal of these potentates was settled in the parish of Wedmore. Thither she proceeded. Here, however, she completely failed. The barbarian, like many who ought to know better, resisted her to the utmost. He would never encourage religion among the poor; it spoiled them, and made them idle and discontented. Nothing daunted, however, by this rebuff, Mrs. More returned to Cheddar; sleeping at a little inn on the road, as her journey and the protracted discussion did not permit her to reach her destination that day. At Cheddar she proceeded to attack others, less influential, but not unimportant to her success. While arguing with one

of these, a friend, who took great interest in her schemes, and to whom these pages stand deeply indebted, suggested to her adversary that the children could not rob orchards and attend Sunday schools at the same time. This argumentum ad *hominem* (if we may by courtesy so designate the being to whom it was addressed), was a happy thought. It became Mrs. More's irresistible weapon,—the lance of Britomart, before which every champion of ignorance went down. They now all admitted that the scheme must be good, promised their hearty concurrence in it, and pledged themselves to do all in their power that might induce the poor to send their children. Difficulties, however, remained to be overcome on the part of the parents. Some would not send their children unless they were paid; a condition which Mrs. More, very properly, refused at once: others were apprehensive that attendance at the school would afford her a legal controul over the children, of which she would take advantage to export them for slaves. But, deep as was the ignorance that prevailed, the scruples of the parents were for the most part overcome by the newly-converted allies.

Mrs. More now took up her quarters at a little inn in Cheddar, while arrangements were making for opening her campaign. A cottage was immediately hired for a school-house; and, that she might cut off all temptations to retreat, she engaged it for seven years, and at a high rent. A religious and respectable woman was immediately

found to undertake the sabbath duties. On the opening of the school by Mrs. More in person, nearly two hundred children and young persons attended; some of the latter, distinguished for profligacy, and not unknown to the criminal jurisdiction of their country. Before the expiration of the year, great numbers of these could repeat the Catechism, read the New Testament, and answer plain questions on the great truths of the Gospel. During this time also, they had practically learned to hallow the sabbath, and been constantly brought to both services of the church.

After a short interval, a master and mistress were procured to instruct the children in the week. With instruction, industry was also combined. Useful work, especially sewing, knitting, and spinning, was taught, and the profits given to the children. To procure information and materials for the last of these employments, Mrs. More actually visited most of the principal clothing towns of Somersetshire. The parents, who, though they had never heard of Adam Smith, had been much inclined to class the schoolmaster with the unproductives, began to see that there was something, after all, in Christian education; and prejudice and opposition gave way. They now came themselves for instruction in spinning, and soon took interest and pleasure in attending the devotional exercises also.

The mistress and her daughter were supplied with medicines and occasional sums of money for

distribution among the sick and needy; and they were instructed by Mrs. More to make their charitable visits spiritually beneficial, by teaching the ignorant and awakening the thoughtless, and bringing them to the school and the church. So faithfully was this duty discharged, that, a few years afterwards, almost the whole parish attended to the grave the remains of the schoolmistress, in whom all felt that they had lost their best of friends; the first who had aroused them to provide for that world on which she had entered, and the first who had made the nature of the provision comprehensible to their minds. For although, in strictness, Hannah More was the prime instrument of this happy work, her representative, resident and diligent, would naturally engross the prominent position in the eyes of the poor.

Two years after Mrs. More's first visit to Cheddar, a most able and zealous curate, the Rev. Thomas Drewitt, came into residence, who cordially forwarded the work. Such was the blessing which attended this institution, that, in the year 1801, the congregation of the church had increased in about ten years to seven hundred, and the communicants, who had averaged fifteen, to about one hundred and twenty.

The effects of goodness, like those of sin, are rarely limited to single generations. This truth is nowhere better instanced than in the benevolent acts of Hannah More; nor does any one of these exemplify it more fully than the foundation of her

BRISTOL CHANNEL
BRISTOL
Belmont
Nailsea
Kenton
WRINGTON
Congresbury
Weston Super Mare
Cowslip Green
Blagdon
Rowberrow
Shipham
Winscombe
Axbridge
Cheddar
Wedmore
SITUATION
of
Mrs. MORE'S SCHOOLS
with the Roads.
0 1 2 3 4 5 10 15
Scale of 15 Miles.

school at Cheddar. Dismissing altogether the consideration of the hundreds who were reared beneath her immediate instruction, and the generations consequently trained in good example, it may here suffice to remark that, at Cheddar, the good work has never been suffered to decline. Close to the rude hut which the vignette at the head of this chapter represents, and which formerly contained the whole establishment, has arisen a noble building, containing two school-rooms, and apartments for the master and mistress, erected at a cost of upwards of 500*l.*; of which 50 pounds were bequeathed by Mrs. More; one hundred were the munificent contribution of the late Marquess of Bath; and the rest was principally raised by the subscriptions of the inhabitants, on the ground where, fifty years before, the attempt to lift the voice of instruction was an act of exemplary heroism.

From Cheddar, Mrs. More was led to examine into the condition of the neighbouring places, which was found to be only too similar. Thirteen contiguous parishes were without a resident curate. Her benevolence, only limited by the extremity of her physical powers,—and scarcely by that,—was immediately aroused to enlarged activity. The Cheddar system was ultimately extended over nine of the neighbouring parishes[1]; and before the expiration of the year about five hun-

[1] Axbridge, Banwell, Winscombe, Blagdon, Yatton, Congresbury, Wedmore, Shipham, and Nailsea.

dred scholars were in training. The course was very simple, and, perhaps, more closely approaching that of the National Society than any thing which had before been attempted. There were four classes: Bible, Testament, Psalter, and Catechism and Alphabet. There was also in use a kind of simplified catechism, called the Mendip School Question-Book; and the Church Catechism, broken into short questions, was used as in the National Schools. The first lesson was always Luke xv.; then followed the parables generally; then the three first chapters of Genesis. The li.st Psalm, the ix.th and liii.d chapters of Isaiah, the Sermon on the Mount, some others of our Lord's discourses, some of Watts's Hymns, and the collect for the day, were committed to memory. When the school met on Sunday mornings, the rules were first read: a suitable prayer, a hymn, and a part of the xxxiv.th Psalm always formed part of the proceedings. The schools attended both services of their respective parish churches. At five o'clock they were dismissed with prayer and a hymn. Finding that what the children learnt at school was commonly lost at home, through the profaneness and ignorance of the parents, Mrs. More invited these, together with the elder children, on the Sunday evenings, to the school, when a plain sermon, generally from Bishop Wilson or Burder, but always printed, though simplified by Mrs. More or her sisters in the reading, with a printed prayer and psalm, closed the exercises of the sabbath. On Wednesday evening there was a class of adults;

and on Tuesday, a plain exposition of the Scriptures by the master or mistress of the school.[1]

Mrs. More's theory of education, described in few words, was *a suitable education for each, and a Christian education for all.* Accordingly, her scheme did not overlook a class, which, from the extent and nature of its local influence, was very far from unimportant: — the rising generation of the yeomanry. In the parishes where she had erected her schools, she had found this class no less ignorant and depraved than their poorer neighbours, and able, as well as willing, to keep their dependents in spiritual and mental degradation. To enlighten the farmers would be the most effective means of enlightening all around them. They were, besides, often called to the exercise of the most important duties. The grave responsibilities of the churchwarden's office were constantly administered by the hands of men who took the most solemn oath to exercise a trust which they did not understand, and occasionally resolved to betray,—till the office and officer were becoming byewords of contempt. The overseers of the poor, on whom the comforts always, and the lives not unfrequently, of the destitute absolutely depended, were taken from the same class;

1 The explanations of the Scriptures given by the school masters and mistresses were brought forward on a subsequent occasion as proceedings of a schismatical character. The truth, however, was, that they were no higher explanations than such as every master of a national school is expected and required to make to the children, but which were, in this instance, full as requisite for persons of less tender years.

and the consequences, where this officer was selfish and callous, were obvious. Regarding the labouring poor as beings no less created for his use than his cattle, the Mendip farmer of those days resisted every plan which he thought calculated to diminish their toils for him, and every expense for their benefit which failed to return to him in the shape of their labour. The true antidote to this, as to every moral evil, was to infuse the spirit of the Gospel; to teach the proud master the just claim of his fellows in creation and redemption; to make him behold his poorer brethren, not only as creatures of one blood, but as actual representatives of the one Saviour of rich and poor, who has declared that he will dismiss the uncompassionate to everlasting punishment, with the retributive sentence, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."[1]

With this view, Mrs. More encouraged the attendance of farmers' children at her schools, on the payment of small periodical sums. Here she met with no opposition. It was to the education of the labourer, not of himself, that the farmer objected. His ignorance prevented his estimating, but not his acknowledging, the value of learning, which it rather led him to exaggerate. Beside, it was now too late to keep his labourer in ignorance, and the only way of maintaining his own superiority was by acquiring superior knowledge.

[1] Matth. xxv. 45.

Writing and cyphering, he was well aware, were useful things, and he was willing to spare a trifle to secure these advantages for his children; and writing and cyphering, Mrs. More very readily allowed, were beneficial and appropriate knowledge for the boy of this class, who had, beside, more time to spare for their acquirement than the child of the day labourer. This addition, therefore, was made in the case of those farmers' children who attended the week-day schools; and the effects fully realized the expectation. The agricultural class became proportionally raised in the scale of spiritual and reasonable beings; and as they associated daily with those who were to be their future servants, the kindly affections of childhood were brought in aid of the commandments of the Gospel. This practice is now common in the Mendip districts; almost every national school deriving a part of its support from the contributions of farmers, who possess, by somewhat larger subscriptions, the privilege of presenting their own children, and of obtaining for them a superior kind of education. The funds of the school are thus augmented, and great publick and private benefits attained. In Wrington the practice has long prevailed; and perhaps no rural parish is more honourably distinguished in the intelligence and respectability of its yeomanry.

Such was the sober and simple, and truly useful, course of knowledge pursued by Mrs. More. "My notions of instructing the poor," she says, in a letter to the Right Hon. J. Hiley Addington,

"are very limited. I allow *no writing;* nor any reading but the Bible, catechism, and such little tracts as may enable them to understand the Church service." Nothing was done without the concurrence of the local clergy. "My object," says Mrs. More, writing to Bishop Beadon, "is not to make fanaticks, but to train up the lower class in habits of industry and piety. I know no way of teaching morals but by teaching principles; nor of inculcating Christian principles without a good knowledge of Scripture."

The advantages of these schools soon became apparent to the respective parishioners. In some instances various principal inhabitants agreed, for the purpose of maintaining regularity, to attend them in turn, and to send their own children by way of example to their workmen. They even bound themselves, under pecuniary penalties, to fulfil the duties they had undertaken.

When the delicate frame and precarious health of Mrs. More are taken into the account, her personal labours at this time are almost incredible. While resident at Cowslip Green, or, afterwards, at Barley Wood, which was the greatest part of every year, she visited, in participation with her sisters, three parishes every Sunday; performing a circuit of from ten to thirty miles, usually being out about thirteen hours, and frequently passing the night in some of the villages. This was continued, with intermissions occasioned by sickness, for upwards of twenty years. Her labours were rewarded with unexpected success, and every in-

stance of advancement proved an additional stimulus to honour God no less with the first fruits of her conquests, than with those of her increase. She now gave prizes; pence for regular attendance; Bibles, prayer-books, &c., to the best proficients in learning and piety. A girl who continued to attend the school till her marriage, received on that occasion a pair of white stockings of Mrs. More's own knitting, five shillings, and a Bible; and clothing was distributed annually to the children. Writing to Bishop Beadon in 1802, on the subject of the Mendip schools, Mrs. More says, "For MANY YEARS I have given away annually near TWO HUNDRED Bibles, common prayer-books, and Testaments." When it is remembered that these books were not scattered at random, to fall into the hands of those who neither desired nor were able to use them, but were, in every instance, bestowed where a pledge for their improvement had been already given, how vast must have been the amount of good effected by these alone! What a mighty benefactor to latest generations does Hannah More appear, considered merely as the distributor of the word of life to thousands, whose hearts her tillage had prepared to receive and fructify it!

It next occurred to Mrs. More that she might at once attract scholars and achieve important good, by establishing, in direct connection with the schools, benefit societies for women. With all the errors, both of calculation and practice, which had impeded the utility of benefit societies,

the principle was still excellent; and it was open to any modification or improvement which its intended application in the present instance might render expedient. The proposal met with ready acquiescence from the mothers and near connections of the children. In some of the parishes the number of members soon amounted to 150; and in less than ten years many hundreds of pounds were saved by this class for sickness and confinements. The payments in the former case were three shillings per week; in the latter, seven shillings and sixpence at once. These advantages were secured by a subscription of three halfpence per week, and exact conformity to the school regulations; and they had the effect of bringing many children to the schools whose parents would otherwise have been hostile or indifferent. Nor was the benefit restricted either to those parishes or to that generation. Most of these clubs subsist to the present day, and great numbers of others have sprung up in the surrounding parishes.

A practical knowledge of the rural poor has generally shewn that an annual day of show and festivity is almost indispensable to the stability of a friendly society. Aware of this, Mrs. More did not neglect the observance in her female clubs, where it might be adopted with perfect security from those excesses which too frequently deform the anniversaries of friendly societies. Once a year her female clubs met, and attended divine service and a sermon at their respective parish churches; after which they withdrew

to the schoolroom, which was gaily decorated with evergreens and flowers by the children of the members. Here they were served with tea and cakes by Mrs. More and her sisters. The neighbouring clergy and gentry were invited, and not a few of the most distinguished persons in the kingdom. A train of carriages extending no less than a mile has frequently been known to leave Mrs. More's residence on these occasions; nor have coronets and mitres disdained the thatched schoolhouses of Cheddar and Shipham. After tea, the society's accounts were examined, and the journal read. The latter recorded every important particular relating to the society and its members in the course of the past year. On these, Mrs. More herself, or one of her sisters, commented plainly, forcibly, and impartially.

The effects of these publick displays may be well imagined. Every member of the club was aware that her conduct would be subjected to the exact scrutiny of the neighbours she most dreaded or respected, and of persons in whose presence, but for these institutions, she could never have expected to stand; and a strict correctness of morality, which, though it is not religion, is both indispensable to it, and favourable to its growth, was at once the consequence in many instances where laxity of morals had formerly borne its natural proportion to religious ignorance. A favourite excuse among the lower class for absence from church is "want of clothes." On these anniversaries, however, neat and clean apparel

was indispensable. Habits of frugality had made it easily attainable; and the thing once attained, the ground of the pretext, and the inclination to employ it, passed away together.

A similar festival was annually given to the school children; but as no single apartment could conveniently contain the assembled parishes, the summit of one of the Mendip hills was selected for the purpose. The same spot was not invariably chosen; but on every occasion the grand and expansive character of the scenery was in fine unison with a commemoration of which pure and enlightened benevolence was the animating spirit. The Tor of Glastonbury, the bold sweep of the Quantocks, the Bristol Channel with its islands and promontories, the mountains of Wales for an extent of thirty miles, the lower range of the Mendips, the distant hills of Gloucestershire, and the terraced heights of Bath, were commonly the majestick bounds of the temple whose dome was heaven, whose floor the living turf, whose garniture the rich blossom of the mingled furze and heather, whose sacrifice the gladdened and grateful heart, whose worship the voice of "babes and sucklings," tuned from obscenities and blasphemies to praises and hosannas. Nor were the constituents of the assembly less diverse than those of the scene. The tones which swayed the court, the council, the senate, and the bar, mingled on these occasions with the rough jollity of a rude, but sober and orderly peasantry. A separate table was spread for the children of each parish,

where they were regaled with roast beef, plum pudding, and cider. At these celebrations not fewer than 1300 children occasionally assembled. To connect every thing with the Church, the clergy of the parishes said grace at their respective tables; and to combine loyalty with religion, "God save the king" was sung before breaking up.

It must not be supposed that this periodical and publick demonstration of Mrs. More's objects, or even ten years' experience of the great advantages which she was conferring on her country, was sufficient to disarm hostility and opposition. The dissenters now became alarmed at her bold encroachments on the territory of ignorance. They had witnessed the brutal barbarism of neglected parishes, without one attempt to enlighten or convert; slumbering pastors and straying flocks kindled no indignant and compassionate zeal; but when Mrs. More, treading the steps of the good Shepherd, went "into the mountains"[1] to seek that which was gone astray, and to shelter it, not in a fold of their devising, nor yet of her own, but in the pale of that church which was no less pure, true, and apostolical for the isolated delinquencies of its ministers, the *consciences* of its opponents became suddenly revolted, and every nerve was braced to resist Mrs. More's innovations. The attempt, which was no less impotent than malicious, may serve to

[1] See Matth. xviii. 12.

illustrate the fallacy of the very prevalent opinion, that the progress of dissent is attributable to the indolence of the clergy. There is nothing in the conduct of the Mendip dissenters which at all differs from what every person of ordinary observation may have remarked in other places. Where clerical superintendence has been defective, whether through inadequate provision or individual supineness, dissent has been, for the most part, unheard of; while, on the contrary, where pastoral means are abundant and well administered, its tabernacles invariably spring up in rank luxuriance. It is a parasite which derives all its vigour and verdure from that oak of ages which it aims to drain and destroy. Methodism, indeed, in the health of the church-blood that enriched its veins, has occasionally reclaimed spots from the wilderness; but the very partial success even of this wisely organized system may convince any reflecting and unprejudiced mind how insufficient are any means for christianizing a nation which are not wielded by a church established and upheld by the state. The practical heathenism of the Mendip villages at the time of which we are now speaking affords no valid objection to this truth. They were such as they were, because the fault of individual clergymen in some instances, and peculiar circumstances in others, did not permit the machinery of the Church to be brought to bear. Thus the villages of Shipham and Rowberrow, whose inhabitants are *exclusively* employed in mining, were very imperfectly evan-

gelized, even after all Mrs. More's labours and expenses. The miner, little accessible during the week, spends his sabbath, when most innocently, beside his hearth in winter, and in summer on the side of some sunny hill. Even the boys who had been educated in the Shipham Sunday-school, and been regularly brought to church during the time of their education, had no sooner left, and become engaged in the local occupation, than their church was deserted, and the great truths they had learned practically forgotten. Nor must it be omitted, that Hannah More and her adventurous sisters possessed, in their sex, an advantage for the work they had undertaken which no clergyman could command. The rude barbarian, who would have spurned from his door the most conciliating of the ministers of Christ, had yet enough of manliness in his savage heart to abstain at least from outrage to woman. The original construction, too, of female clubs, whereby knowledge and competence were brought to the hearths of the most ignorant, depraved, and wretched, would have been an impossibility, humanly speaking, to any clergyman, in such a position of society.

The palliation of clerical negligence would be almost as sinful as the thing itself; in a clergyman, perhaps, altogether so. It is not, therefore, to justify ministerial indolence that a few considerations are here offered to the reader on the prevalent belief that the clergy of the last century were generally remiss in their duty. On the

general state of religion during the same period some observations will occur in the next chapter; suffice it here to say, that the popular standard was low; and though this is no excuse for those clergymen who debased the truth to meet it, it must in fairness be conceded that the clerical body at least maintained a decided religious superiority in society; while some of them were as eminent for piety and diligence as those of any other period before or since. But the duties of minister and people are correlative; and if the people *will not* do their part, the minister *cannot* perform his. If they flinch at unpalatable truths; if they say, with self-deceiving Israel, "to the seers, See not, and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits,"[1] the consequence is obvious; the minister lowers the requirements of the Gospel, or they desert him. In the former case, he is justly stigmatized as a time-server and a traitor; in the latter, he is most unjustly, but not the less certainly, reproached with his empty pews. Thus, in every instance, the clergyman bears the blame. The abolition of "the daily sacrifice" of prayer and thanksgiving in every church but the cathedral; the non-observance by publick worship of those publick days of joy and humiliation which the Church had consecrated in her purest times; the contraction of the sabbath services, in many places, into one only, and their alternate total supension in

[1] Isaiah, xxx. 10.

some others; the distant intervals at which the life-giving grace of the Eucharist is, in most churches, afforded,—all these things are much less referable to the inattention of the clergy than to the non-attendance of the people. When the daily sacrifice was wholly deserted; when the sabbath morning service in the country, and the evening in towns, was abandoned also; when the clergyman came into the desk on the holyday, and found none of his neighbours to join him; when he bade the congregation to the Lord's table, and "they all with one consent began to make excuse;"[1] it is at least nothing wonderful that he should have gradually foregone the unmeaning ceremony of presenting himself in the temple, where not even "two or three" could be gathered to meet him in the name of the Saviour. In regard to the instruction of the rising generation, the clergyman of the last century found prejudice and opposition where he might naturally have looked for patronage and support. The yeoman almost always, the squire not unfrequently, was actually hostile to the education of the poor. The expenses of a school were considerable; that of Cheddar cost nearly 100*l.* per annum; frequently the entire income of an incumbent.[2] There was then no National Society to assist the efforts of private benevolence; nor could an individual country

1 Luke, xiv. 18.

2 There are in England and Wales 4,361 livings (nearly one half of the whole) under 150*l.* per annum. Of these, some are under 12*l.*, and 1,350 are under 70*l.*—*Parliamentary Return*, 1815.

clergyman resort, for his single parish, to the source which was readily opened to Mrs. More for her *school union*,—the purses of great and influential persons utterly unconnected with the locality. It may be added that the parochial clergy in general fell in with Mrs. More's plans, and cordially promoted both her schools and her clubs. From the parliamentary return of 1815, it appears that there were no fewer than 4,809 parishes in England and Wales in which a clergyman *could not* reside, and more than one half of these had no parsonage at all. Non-residence, therefore, was, in many cases, compulsory. These facts must be taken into consideration, in order to a just estimate of the clergy of that time; who are not to be measured by the standard of an age distinguished from the last in nothing more than its activity, whether for good or evil; when the general subject of religion excites far more interest in the publick mind, and when, if rashness and audacity in some quarters prevail above all precedent, just and sober views of religious obligation and church communion are, in others, rapidly making way; and means of spiritual benefit which had then no existence are daily rising into efficiency. Nor is the fact wholly undeserving observation in this place that the effective working of the Established Church, and the due superintendence of its parts, had been greatly crippled by an unconstitutional and most injurious measure resorted to for temporary purposes about half a century before. The perpetual dissolution of the

Convocation placed the Church of England, in a most important respect, behind every Christian communion in the world; there being no other instance, either among churches or sectaries, of a religious body without a deliberative council for the management of its internal affairs. One of the first and most natural consequences of this ill-advised and pernicious step was the disjunction of the clergy. Insulated from each other, and each labouring in a local charge, no order of men has naturally so few opportunities of meeting and conferring. But at the election of a proctor, the clergy of a diocese assembled; the qualifications of candidates were discussed; the measures which they were expected to advocate or oppose were debated; suggestions for the efficiency of religious provisions were thrown out; and while each clergyman returned to his parish aroused, enlightened, and prepared for duties and difficulties, the representative went to Convocation to realize the designs which his constituents had projected. Here, through their accredited organs, he had the means of learning what the clergy of other dioceses thought on the same and other subjects; and here, too, all could learn the opinions of their diocesans; and a wise, safe, deliberate, and uniform policy united bishops with clergy, priest with priest, and parish with parish. The clergy, too, were constantly under the eye of their diocesans and their brethren, and were working on a common plan towards the accomplishment of a single design. Such was the theory, and, in

great measure, the practice, of the Church; and, without such a theory, it is evident such results would be unattainable. The suppression of Convocation split the ecclesiastical polity of England into as many fragments as there were cures; ganglions of vitality, little compensating for the extinction of the common head. The clergy, no longer under reciprocal inspection, were tempted to remissness; mutual communication suspended, private and party views found a natural inlet, and a common system for the government of parishes became impossible. To the dangers and evils of such a position, both clergy and laity were too insensible. The law forbade the admission of any but churchmen to the functions of legislation; and in this, it was thought, a sufficient protection for the Church might always be found. Those barriers have indeed been since removed; but it was not only external protection which the Church required for the due fulfilment of her high appointment; it was a vigorous internal self-legislation, whereby the spiritual requirements of the nation might be known and met as they arose; a quiet, insensible reform, whereby abuses might be corrected as they occurred; a constant, living energy to direct existing funds, or guide new springs of benevolence, into useful channels, and thus plant the church or the school wherever a population was outgrowing its spiritual supplies, instead of being terrified on a sudden at the necessity of doing something, and the impossibility of doing any thing adequate, for a mass of intractable

paganism.[1] Hence, too, the long neglect of spiritual means for our colonial possessions; the dreary and awful destitution of our East and West Indian, and our North American and Australian, settlements; the weakening of that only durable bond between the parent country and the colony, the profession of a common religion. Hence, also, the growth of party feeling between men who differed only in their speculative views, while equally devoted to the service of their common Lord; and who, if more frequently brought together, and acting on a common plan laid down by competent authority, would have discovered that a minute agreement in non-essentials was not indispensable to Christian fellowship, and that very distinct ideas on the quinquarticular controversy were perfectly compatible with the integrity of the Christian faith. Such as chose to limit the grand scheme of redemption to a few favoured souls, would nevertheless have hesitated to represent this as the whole Gospel, and arrogantly to dignify its preachers with the exclusive title of Evangelical; while those who took a more com-

[1] The following are some of the fearful particulars disclosed in the Second Report of the Church Commission. They refer to London alone:—

Parishes.	Aggregate Population.	Church-room.	Clergymen.
4	166,000	8,200	11
21	739,000	66,155	45
9	232,000	27,327	19
34	1,137,000	101,682	75

prehensive view of the Divine love would have borne in mind that the narrower theory had found advocates in men whose Christian sincerity and whose devotion to the Church of England was beyond all question; that Hall and Laud, Hammond and Beveridge, were alike stedfast and valiant for the truth.

Such were some of the causes contributing to a state of things which found a partial redress in the diligence and wisdom of one pious and prudent female. Nothing, indeed, can be more admirable than the just temperament of zeal and discretion which characterized the proceedings of Hannah More. In the former quality she was never surpassed; yet her system was free from every irregularity; and though in itself an innovation, and presenting to many minds, before it was well known, the image, at least, of an *imperium in imperio*, it was in strictest union with the church, and as completely incorporated with the parochial instruction of the minister as if it had been part of the ecclesiastical establishment. From a plan so wisely organized much might be expected, and much was realized, as will appear from a few random particulars which I now subjoin. I have not the means of ascertaining accurately the chronology of all Mrs. More's schools, nor is the point very important.

The school at Shipham was established in 1789. The rector, the Rev. — Penny, fitted up a house for the purpose, at his own expense. Of its effects his curate, subsequently his successor, the Rev. James Jones, gives the following account:

"In the year 1775 I undertook the cure of Shipham, and found the poor in a very uncivilized state; the women generally destitute of industry and frugality; the young men spending the sabbath in sporting and hunting, and the children in wandering, idle, and almost naked."—"I attend [the school] every Sunday, and it gives me pleasure to observe that the most regular attendants at church and sacrament are they who attend the school and reading. A weekly school of industry, and a benefit society for the poor women, were established here by Mrs. H. More; all which institutions, in a place of such extreme poverty, are eminently advantageous, and their good effects are evident in the gradual diminution of vice, and the growth of industry and morality. A general spirit of sobriety prevails among the young women. A Methodist meeting, which was in this place before the school was established, has been withdrawn long since. There is not a dissenter in the parish."[1] The Rev. Lewis Hart, writing in

[1] The excellent and laborious pastor who penned the above statement was "prais'd, wept, and honour'd by the Muse he lov'd." The following is his epitaph in Shipham church:—

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
THE REV. JAMES JONES, RECTOR OF SHIPHAM,
WHO DIED JUNE 15, 1825, AGED 86.

FULL SIXTY YEARS HIS FLOCK THE SHEPHERD FED;
HIS PREACHING TAUGHT THEM, AND HIS PRACTICE LED.
VALIANT FOR TRUTH, HE FOUGHT THE CHRISTIAN FIGHT,
NOT IN HIS OWN, BUT IN HIS SAVIOUR'S MIGHT.
E'EN WHEN DISEASE HIS WASTED FRAME ASSAIL'D,
STILL TO THE LAST TRIUMPHANT FAITH PREVAIL'D.
HANNAH MORE.

1801, draws a similar picture of the condition of Nailsea, of which he was curate. "During the three first years of my residence," he writes, "I, with little success, endeavoured by admonitions from the pulpit, and (as I thought myself authorized) by private advice, to restrict the immoral conduct of the poor. The hours appointed for divine service were spent by them in the alehouse, or in the amusements of pitch and toss, ball-playing, &c. Their children, neglected, were suffered to run wild in a lamentable state of ignorance and vice. About eight years ago, a Sunday school was established by Mrs. H. More. A great change for the better was soon apparent."—"The children were taught to read their Bible, and such books as accorded with the principles of the Church of England."—"The good example set by the youth operated on their seniors to produce an attention to their religious concerns, and to take them off from their vicious habits. And it affords me much pleasure to say that, on my departure from them in October last, they were a much more orderly, decent, and moral set of people, and regular in their attendance at church, which a numerous congregation evinced."

In 1790 an event already adverted to occurred at Cheddar, which proved how effective Mrs. More's system had been in christianizing that parish. The schoolmistress, Mrs. Baber, then departed to her reward. She had, doubtless, learned much in her own school; and this simple, but true and exalted wisdom, had been faithfully applied, as it

accumulated, to the souls of her scholars. The Rev. John Boak, Rector of Paston, near Peterborough, was then the diligent and effective curate of Cheddar; and to this gentleman I am indebted for a notice of this excellent woman's life and death. "I had long witnessed," he says, "her attention to the school, and her earnestness in impressing important texts of Scripture on the memories of the children; the good effect of which I witnessed in many of them." In the selection of these texts, she does not appear, like the enthusiast or the theorist, to have been influenced by a desire to support some controversial scheme; they were chosen for their solemnity and impressiveness, and there was no small originality both in their choice and application. One of these was, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be."[1] From this she inferred the necessity of being Christ's servant, and the certain blessedness of those who deserved that designation. The argument was just, and the application, in her own case, certainly fruitful. She laboured as the servant of Him, with whom it was her best hope to be hereafter. "Almost in the very article of death," says Mr. Boak, in the sermon which he preached at her funeral, "I visited our departed friend, and heard her say, with a firm and steady voice, and with something like joy in her countenance, 'I know in whom I have believed. My

[1] John, xii. 26.

Saviour has said, 'Where I am, there shall also my servant be;' but I am an unworthy servant, and it is all mercy; yet I can depend on the promises of Christ, on His merits and intercession.'" During her illness, she dwelt so much on this text, that Mr. Boak selected it at the funeral, where the attendance of a weeping parish attested how diligently and how effectively she had fulfilled her task.

In 1801, Mr. Boak writes: "I resided at Axbridge from 1784 to 1798, and during that period was curate of different parishes where Mrs. More had schools."—"In all the parishes where I have been curate, I have found the schools to be particularly useful in bringing my parishioners to church and sacrament, and in amending their moral conduct. I have also observed them to be a powerful check to the growth of sectarism. The teachers have been loyal and peaceable, and firmly attached to the Established Church."

Mrs. More had the gratification to meet with occasional proofs that she had "not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." Thirty years after the establishment of the school at Cheddar, she attended the death-bed of one of the scholars. Had this been all the reward of her expense and labour, it would have been an abundant compensation. Two young persons, who, but for her interposition, would, in all probability, have lived in brutish ignorance, and died in desperate wickedness, had, through her instrumentality, imbibed from the

same lips the same lessons of truth and blessedness, and become partners for life, in the hope of proving partners for eternity. United thus in soul no less than in heart, they realized, in an humble station, happiness, which no other art than theirs can procure for prince or peasant. But the hours for which both had been preparing from childhood had now arrived,—that of affliction to the husband,—that of the great and final change to the wife. In a long and painful disease, the sufferer exhibited an uniform, sober, and enlightened piety, and passed into the eternal world with every appearance and expression of a well-grounded hope, leaving to the surviving mourner the inheritance of the same blessed expectations, a sufficient support and consolation under a loss to which no earthly comforts could afford aught resembling an adequate remedy. Mrs. More had the satisfaction, in the course of her long life, to know that this instance was by no means solitary; and not only to see some of her scholars witnessing a good confession on their death-beds, but to rejoice in the industry and usefulness of others, whom she found in distant places and on various occasions, adorning in all things the doctrine of that God and Saviour whom they had learned to love and serve within the precincts of her schools.

The school at Yatton was established in 1791; but this and all the others expired with the eighteenth century, except Cheddar, Nailsea,

Shipham, and Wedmore; of which last a brief mention may be made.

In the autumn of 1798, Mrs. More, at the request of several clergymen, including the curate, carried her aggressive operations against vice and irreligion into that populous parish, situate about fifteen miles from Cowslip Green. Mr. Boak and Mr. Drewitt, for some weeks previous, acted as pioneers, and explained, especially from the pulpit, the nature and objects of the schools. Here, however, as at Cheddar, the opposition of the principal farmer was to be encountered; but he was more active and more methodical. He organized the farmers in open resistance; even the parish clerk, while Mr. Drewitt was officiating, gave notice of a meeting to oppose the school. The accusation was, "teaching French principles;" a charge which would almost seem to have been suggested by some waggish opponent for its very absurdity. The school was, however, opened, and a respectable attendance graced the opening. Meanwhile, the farmers had discovered that the schoolmaster, not having taken out a licence, might be presented in the court of the Dean of Wells, whose peculiar the benefice is. A letter, written about this time by Mrs. More to the Right Hon. J. H. Addington, amusingly illustrates the state of knowledge as well as religion at Wedmore. "I cannot forbear telling you," says Mrs. M., "that the people in that quarter have been to the *fortune teller* to know if I am a Me-

thodist, and if my school is methodistical. The answer of the oracle was ambiguous, but inclining to the negative. She wished, however, to know on what their suspicion was grounded; and being told it was because they sung the new version of the Psalms, the Pythian declared there was nothing methodistical in that; but still sagely suggested that her decision of the question would depend on her knowledge of the *tunes*. This hint they caught hold of with eagerness, declaring they had now proof positive; for that none of the tunes sung at the school were *in Farmer Clapp's book!* Thus the point was settled! Now, don't you think that the folly of such opposers furnishes strong ground for one's persisting to make them a little wiser in spite of themselves?"

The master was, however, charged with methodistical practices, such as extempore prayer, &c., which he denied; but at last the parish, including the clergy, were of opinion that his school was not conducted on Church principles. The master was, accordingly, summarily dismissed by Mrs. More, and a satisfactory person substituted. It is pleasing to record, that the farmer who had accused the school of teaching French principles afterwards sent his own family to the instructions and the readings. But the school had still to contend with great opposition, and was closed no long time after. The dismissal of the schoolmaster afterwards assumed a very disproportionate importance in an affair which it is the painful duty of the

biographer of Hannah More not to pass unnoticed. In the meanwhile, it will be necessary partially to retrace the period embraced in this chapter, for the purpose of developing a separate province of Mrs. More's activity, which could not, without some degree of confusion, be fully treated in conjunction with the subjects here discussed.

COTTAGE OF THE SHEPHERD OF SALISBURY PLAIN, CHERRIL DOWN, WILTS.

Fear God. Honour the King. 1 *Pet.* ii. 17.

CHAPTER VI.

THE reader not intimately acquainted with Mrs. More's history or energy will be little prepared to learn, that, during the time she was conducting schools and friendly societies in parishes extending over an area of about seventy-five square miles, she could find any other active occupation. She was, however, at the same time pursuing with no less ardour and activity a very distinct and far more extensive career of usefulness; so distinct, that it has been thought advisable to reserve the account of it for a separate chapter.

It has already been observed that the "Thoughts

on the Manners of the Great" were only intended to be part of a complete work, and, by the removal of bad practices, to clear the ground for the insertion of good principles. It does not belong to this place to enter at any length on the maxims which prevailed among the great of that period, and formed the foundation of their practice. It may, however, be noted, in a general way, that these principles were the growth of long habits, and the result of remote causes. Never was a truer position than that of Bishop Heber, which denounces the confusion of things evil only in their excess with things essentially sinful.[1] Intervals not merely of rest, but of amusement, are not only uninjurious, but actually conducive to the prosecution of active duties; and he who proscribes all publick diversions in the gross, and denounces all participation in them as unbecoming a Christian, is not less undiscriminating than he who should forbid the use of wine, because it may be made subservient to intoxication. Both would alike be guilty of that "voluntary humility,"

[1] "Although his [Bishop Heber's] mind was deeply imbued with devotional feelings, he considered a moderate participation in what are usually called 'worldly amusements' as allowable and blameless." — "He thought that the strictness which made no distinction between *things blamable only in their abuse* and *the practices which were really immoral*, was prejudicial to the interests of true religion; and on this point his opinion remained unchanged to the last. His own life, indeed, was a proof that amusement *so* participated in may be perfectly harmless, and no way interfere with any religious or moral duty."—*Life of Heber, by his Widow*, vol. i. p. 420, 421.

which is, in truth, the most offensive arrogance, as it virtually erects itself into a higher standard than His who "adorned and beautified with his presence and first miracle that he wrought" the marriage festival in Cana. This principle, which, under other circumstances and climates, produced the Anachorites and Stylites, appeared, under the dominion of the Puritans, in a fanatical hostility to the most innocent of diversions; not only confounding the dance and the song with the most atrocious crimes, but even intruding its austerities into the houses of God, expelling instrumental musick, and demolishing the elaborate embellishments which pious art had consecrated to the service of the sanctuary. The consequences, at the Restoration, were such as might have been easily foreseen. A violent reaction ensued; the iron pressure of dominant fanaticism once removed, the sense of new-found liberty, and abhorrence of every idea associated with the oppressor, carried the publick mind with irresistible elasticity to the opposite extreme. The example and influence of a luxurious court acted in the same direction, and London became a Sybaris. A voluptuous stage replaced an ascetick pulpit; and the ear, long stunned with the denunciations of Peters, was fain to repose on the blandishments of Rochester. This pernicious consequence long survived its cause. Of its effects on general society, under a very different government, the "Tatler" and "Spectator" are no equivocal witnesses. The ethicks of a still later period are to be inferred

from the writings of Richardson, the great *moral* writer of his day; whose morality, however, has little in common with that of the Bible, and whose illustrations are so far from moral, that no Christian parent would permit many of them to the eyes of his children. To stem the deluge of ignorance and iniquity, the Wesleys had projected the institution of Methodism, which, in its beginning, was little more than a recal to the meditation of the Bible, and to the discipline of the Church. Had it so continued, a greater and more well-timed blessing to our country could not have been imagined. But its founders became tainted with unscriptural notions, and with errors on points of discipline; associating, besides, the wildest fanaticks in their labours, who adopted the cant and austerities of Puritanism, to the disgust of sober Christians; while "the fashionable world," whose vices had arisen in a manner out of those very severities, burst into fury at the very name of Methodism, with which, as a very natural consequence of its ignorance and impetuosity, it generally confounded every thing like religious seriousness, however scriptural and sober. Even a punctual observance of the publick worship of *the Church* became stigmatized by many as *methodistical;* and thus, the Bible unread at home, and the lessons of the Church unheard, "the fashionable world" was little more than professedly Christian. Even the profession of Christianity was not universal: a Collins and a Hobbes, a Bolingbroke and a Shaftesbury, had been the legitimate off-

spring of a corrupted people: a Hume and a Gibbon were carrying on the work; and their writings made ready converts of those who had already found in the precepts of the gospel an insuperable argument against its evidences. The practices adverted to in Mrs. More's treatise on the manners of the great were the natural fruit of this state of the publick religion. Having succeeded so well in her attack on some of the prevailing symptoms, Mrs. More now set herself in earnest to assail the disease itself, in its seat, the heart. Accordingly, in 1790, appeared, anonymously, "An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World, by one of the Laity." In this work, Mrs. More traces her moral maxims to the religious principles which are their legitimate root and foundation; shews how much society had degenerated in regard to these; and from the neglect of religion in education, and that of publick and family worship, deduces irresistibly the decline of Christianity as a principle of action. The authorship could not long remain a secret. Like its predecessor, the Estimate brought complimentary letters from all quarters to the writer. That it was extensively read is evidenced by the number of editions which it reached in two years,—five; and that it was extensively beneficial is unquestionable. Indeed, its statements are too firmly built on fact and just reasoning, to admit a suspicion, that, among the thousands who read it, it could possibly prove uninfluential. The book itself became *fashionable;* and fashion, however

variable, is not so inconsistent as to act the patron and opponent at once.

Shortly after the publication of this work, Mrs. More, for a short time, suspended her operations as monitress of the high and missionary to the low, at a call from a different quarter of philanthropy. A young heiress, a child of fourteen, had been entrapped into a marriage with a profligate, who was believed to be living with her in London. Even the rescue of this victim was not an enterprise beyond the hopes of Hannah More. She hastened to town; procured a proclamation in the Gazette for the arrest of the parties; took lodgings in the neighbourhood of Bow Street, and spent some days with constables and police officers in searching houses for the villain, until she ascertained that he had carried the unfortunate child to France. Just as Mrs. More was about to return, she received intelligence that a young woman who had attempted to drown herself had been taken to the Middlesex hospital. She immediately started with a friend for this place, and found that the poor girl had been conveyed to her lodgings. Thither she followed her immediately, paid the arrears of her rent, and brought her away, in the hope that, under her eye and admonition, she might be reclaimed from a life of sin. But her beneficence brought no fruit, except its return into her own bosom. The misguided creature had not only been corrupted by a life of wickedness, but deliberately poisoned by infidel books; and she returned

in desperation to her evil courses. The practical infidelity which had long prevailed in "The Fashionable World" was, as above remarked, now beginning to merge in open rejection of Revelation, until the counsels of Providence, which convert the most appalling evils to the most signal blessings, saw fit to arouse the Sadducees of fashion with a more startling reveillie than even the alarm of Hannah More could inspire.

Religious ignorance, together with practical infidelity, under the profession of Christianity, had, in France, already opened an inlet to speculative unbelief, with all its attendant enormities. Even under the comparatively mild and enlightened discipline of the Gallican Church, the Scriptures were theoretically withholden, and practically neglected among the laity; while the clergy, to whom, at least in the Vulgate Latin, they were not unfamiliar, certainly did not regard them as higher authority than the Dialogues of Gregory, or the "Flos Sanctorum." The truths of Christianity never appeared in any other company than that of the fables of Popery; and both were constantly represented as integral portions of a single superstructure based on a common foundation. There was no opportunity allowed for a Bereean discrimination; and it is little matter of surprise, that a Christianity so unsound should give way on the first assaults of infidelity. The achievements of our Lady of Loretto, and of the warlike Apostle of Compostella, were easily borne down either by argument or ridicule; and those who

believed the foundation miracles of the Christian faith to be entitled only to an equal degree of credence, were, of course, easily seduced from the hopes of eternity. There existed also, in the depraved manners with which the profligate courts of the two last sovereigns had inoculated the French people, moral inducements to infidelity, more effective than any sceptical theories. In a soil thus prepared, a less assiduous tillage might have realized an ample harvest of unbelief. But culture was not wanting. The antichristian conspiracy in France was conducted at once with a degree of forethought and energy worthy of the best of causes, and with a recklessness of instruments and consequences worthiest of itself. The abuse of terms has always been a favourite and effective instrument with the enemies of truth and goodness, who, to impose on popular credulity, have generally assumed the designation most opposite to their real character. Where the name of "sceptick" or "infidel" would have excited horror, the title of "*philosopher*," which is never so well appropriated as by the Christian believer, was precisely the most calculated to conciliate respect and confidence. The advocates of knowledge, the assertors of intellectual right, could never be opposed, even by such as knew their hollowness, without a *primâ facie* case of ignorance and bigotry against the opponent. The term "*Toleration*" was another of these abused words. The revocation of the edict of Nantes, and the long train of enormities consequent on

that atrocious act of Popish perfidy, had aroused the indignation of every heart in France, in which bigotry had not totally extinguished humanity; and enlightened opinions on the subject of religious persecution were gaining ground. Of this circumstance the infidel cabal were not slow to avail themselves. Under the disguise, then, of removing all persecutions for mere religious opinions, and securing to every man protection in person, property, and religious worship,—(a principle which every enlightened Christian must cordially approve)—it was sought to introduce a system of religious proscription, persecution, and bloodshed, which would have more than surfeited the Jezebel of the house of Medici. The word *knowledge* was no less grossly perverted. Cheap and entertaining works, from the encyclopædia to the tract, adapted to all classes, ostensibly for the purpose of propagating philosophical and useful information, but really to infuse the virus of infidelity, were rapidly brought out by the confederacy. The Encyclopædia was the great machine. The leaven was disguised principally in articles on history or natural philosophy; those on religion openly advocating Christianity, though not without some insidious cavils. Persons of orthodoxy and reputation, unsuspicious of its object, allowed themselves to be associated in the work; and thus, under the specious covert of philosophy, reason, knowledge, civil and religious liberty, was nurtured the conflagration which was to devour them all; and which, after darkly smouldering through

the greater part of a century in the vitals of the social fabrick, which it had already eaten away, burst at once upon the day through all the walls of the edifice, involving simultaneously all classes of society alike in indiscriminate combustion. Its first moral fruits were lawlessness and rapine; and the higher, as the richer and more defenceless, became the prey of the poorer. The practical part of the doctrine had too many attractions for want and cupidity to be long without its disciples in England. Happily, however, the Christianity of the English Church was of a firmer texture than that which the knife of Rousseau and the hatchet of Voltaire had so mercilessly shred away. Woven entirely from the tough web of the Bible, with no thread of legend or tradition to break away at the touch of ridicule, and disconnect the solid parts of the structure, it only required to be used. Like the adulterate Christianity of France, it had been too little acknowledged as a principle of life; but there was this difference: the acknowledgment, whenever made, was encumbered with no absurdity. In the Christianity of the Church of England there was nothing of which genuine philosophy could be ashamed; it courted the light and challenged inspection; and all that was needed was the honest and practical admission of its supreme claim. The great body of the people of England, too, with all their depravations, were loyal; and, accustomed never to separate the ideas of "Church and King," were attached to the ecclesiastical polity of their country, even when

least availing themselves of its provisions. Infidelity was so far from popular, that it was, for the most part, infamous, and that, too, among many who were too little heedful of the truths which they would have shuddered to dispute. The pestilence that was desolating the mind of France did not, therefore, communicate so much infection as alarm to her island neighbour. Still the doctrines of the French Revolution were not left to make their way in England by their simple accommodation to the depravity of nature every where. They had preachers and propagators who were disseminating the poison with Satanick diligence. Tracts of the most anarchical and blasphemous character were dispersed in the manufactory, the cottage, the workshop, and the mine. Sanatory precautions were immediately taken; yet these were not so entirely successful as to prevent sporadick cases of the disease: and the nation was not without apprehension lest the tempest which was threatening to whelm the mansions, palaces, and temples of France in noble, royal, and sacerdotal blood, might roll its sanguine deluge over the homes and altars of England.

Hannah More had not been an inattentive spectatress of political proceedings in France. The despotick monarchy of that country had never been exercised in the most paternal manner; nor did it seem likely that its insolence and oppression would ever be abated except by some movement on the part of its subjects. Lewis XVI., though personally virtuous and mild, had been

educated in the most arbitrary notions of prerogative; nor was it likely that, however disposed to exercise his vast power for the good of his subjects, he would spontaneously grant a charter of liberties, or a share in legislation, by which the power of his successors might be checked and restricted. Of all the devices ever invented for the maintenance and consolidation of an unqualified tyranny, none perhaps was ever so complete as the *lettre de cachet*, by which any subject, without trial, or even accusation, might be, at any moment, hurried to imprisonment for life at the mere will of the sovereign. How little soever it was possible for the Christian to approve of rebellion; how necessarily soever he must condemn the act of violence which prostrated that horrible engine of tyranny, the Bastille; still it was scarcely possible, at the time, not to entertain some hopes that these excesses might subside at length in orderly obedience to a form of government less unworthy of an intelligent people. Such hopes were cherished by many who were friends to genuine liberty; among them was the illustrious Edmund Burke; nor was Hannah More ashamed to be of the number.[1] Deploring and condemning the act of violence by which the Bastille was demolished, she yet believed she could see in this outrage only the ebullition of a people maddened with their wrongs, but ready, when righted, to submit themselves to the yoke of a monarchy limited by justice and law.

[1] Even the meek and *unpolitical* Cowper anticipated with delight the overthrow of the Bastille.—"*Task*," v. 94, &c.

Like her distinguished friend, however, she did not long continue under this delusion. The spirit which animated the deeds of the party was soon too evident to her to be mistaken: and long before the darkest features of the revolution had attained their full proportion, England did not number among her sons or her daughters a more ardent antagonist of the revolutionary party than Hannah More.

Accordingly, in the year 1792, when violence and rapine, under the names of liberty and equality,—and atheism and blasphemy, called, by a like perversion, philosophy and reason, were preached and published among the peasantry of England through the agency of clubs and emissaries,—universal, almost, became the call on Mrs. More to arm in the most holy cause of religion and order. But the most importunate, perhaps, of her suitors was her friend Bishop Porteus, who urged her acquaintance with the habits and feelings of the lower orders, and her clear and vigorous style, as an irresistible call on her pen for some simple production, calculated to dispel the delusions so assiduously propagated among the vulgar. Nor was the appeal in vain.—With a modest distrust, however, of her success in a line of utility so different from any thing she had hitherto attempted, she published anonymously her admirable dialogue called "Village Politicks; by Will. Chip, a Country Carpenter"; in which, by plain and irresistible arguments, expressed in language pure but universally intelligible, she exposes the folly and atrocity of the revolutionary

doctrines. The better to disguise the authorship, she employed Mr. Rivington, instead of her usual publisher Mr. Cadell, to introduce her pamphlet to the publick. This device had a brief success, and Mrs. More was not a little amused by receiving numerous copies of the tract from her friends, accompanied by the warmest commendations, and the most earnest entreaties to give it the widest possible circulation. But long concealment was impracticable; and while all were praising the work, the more discerning began to congratulate the authoress. Its circulation was incalculable; some thousands were purchased by Government for distribution; it was reprinted by societies and individuals; it was translated into French, and even into Italian, with such accommodations as suited the Papal government; and there is every reason to believe that this clear, concise, and sensible statement of a question which was then perplexing and ensnaring thousands had a very considerable effect in reclaiming the deluded, and fore-arming the sound.

A pious theism erected on the *rejection* of Revelation is a mere chimæra, of which no instance can be produced. The French infidels at first spoke with almost devotional reverence of the Supreme Deity, who, as they alleged, was dishonoured by the superstitious mists with which Christianity clouded his perfections. Whether they had not as yet been given over to a reprobate mind, to disbelieve that which none but the "fool" can disbelieve, or whether they did not

think the publick mind ripe for the admission of the last abomination, is unimportant to the fact. The latter was, doubtless, the case in the majority of instances; but, as their opinions struck root, flourished, and bore seed, they unveiled their esoterick blasphemies, and, unconsciously fulfilling the declaration of Him whom they insanely combated, proved that "he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."[1] At length they had confidence enough to promulgate their views in the national legislature, and offer them for the national adoption. Their organ was M. Jacob Dupont, and the occasion chosen for the purpose was the national establishment of schools for the education of youth. The principle of these was to be the studious exclusion of religion,—a principle invariably adopted by all speculatists on education whose object is the subversion of order and morality. Duquesnai and the "Economists" had long represented to Lewis XV. the expediency of taking the instruction of the people out of the hands of the clergy, and giving them a more enlarged and liberal education than could be expected, as they said, at the hands of ecclesiasticks. The mechanicks in towns, and the agricultural peasantry, languished, it was represented, for knowledge, which the college[2] and village school had not to impart. Meantime D'Alembert had organized his "committee of edu-

[1] John v. 23.

[2] It can scarcely be necessary to mention that the *colleges*, as they are termed, in France, are only foundation *schools*.

cation," and established an agency so extensive throughout the whole of France, that scarcely a step was taken in tuition, from the appointment of a parish schoolmaster to that of a professor in a college, or a tutor in a family, without the interference or cognizance of the infidel committee. By the vigilance of a faithful minister, the king had become acquainted with this conspiracy against the souls of his subjects; but, though he did not sanction the schools of the Economists, he had adopted towards their advocates that spirit of false conciliation which only emboldens and enables bad men to prosecute their schemes, who, in this instance, not only subverted the throne of his successor, but lifted their hand against the altars of the King of kings. On the 14th of December 1792, the real object of education without religion was avowed in the Convention. It was not the grave and more decent pretence of toleration, liberality, or the impossibility of amalgamating the education of different sects,—but it was the candid avowal, that no religion was to be taught, because—THERE WAS NONE!—"What! thrones are overturned! sceptres broken! kings expire! and yet—THE ALTARS OF GOD remain! Tyrants, in outrage to nature, continue to burn an impious incense on those altars! The thrones that have been reversed have left these altars naked, unsupported, and tottering. A single breath of enlightened reason will now be sufficient to make them disappear." "Nature and reason, these ought to be the gods of men! These are

my gods!" ["It is amusing, forsooth, to panegyrize a religion in which we are taught that it is better to obey God than men.[1]"] "For myself, I honestly avow to the Convention, *I am*—AN ATHEIST!"[2] Such were the actual words uttered by Dupont in the French National Convention, and received with all but unanimous applause!

The horrible oration, from which the above short extracts, not without shuddering, are transcribed, was widely circulated throughout England, and Mrs. More received not a few letters on the subject. In one from Lord Orford, published in his works, the following remarks occur: "I am not sure that you have not been still more shocked by a crime that passes even the guilt of shedding the blood of poor Lewis,—to hear of Atheism avowed, and the avowal tolerated by monsters calling themselves a National Assembly! But I have no words that can reach the criminality of such *inferno-human* beings, but must compose a

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[1] The passage in brackets, although in the original, is not found in Mrs. More's translation, from which the English of the rest is given.

[2] "Quoi! les trônes sont renversés! les sceptres brisés! les rois expirent! et les autels de Dieu restent debout encore! Des tyrans, outrageants la nature, y brûlent un encens impie! Mais les trônes abbattus laissent cependant ces autels à nu, sans appui, et chancelans. Un souffle de la raison eclairée suffit pour les faire disparaître." "La nature et la raison, voila les dieux de l'homme! voila mes dieux!" "Il est plaisant, en effet, préconiser une religion dans laquelle on enseigne qu'il vaut mieux obéir à Dieu qu' aux hommes." "Je l' avouerai de bonne foi à la convention, je suis—ATHÉE!"—*Discours de M. Dupont, Moniteur, Dec.* 16, 1792.

term that aims at conveying my idea of them; for the future it will be sufficient to call them *the French.* I hope no other nation will ever deserve to be confounded with them." The subject being thus, in a manner, forced on Mrs. More's consideration, it occurred to her that, by publishing some remarks upon this infamous speech, she might effect a twofold benefit,—expose the enormous wickedness of the party who then directed affairs in France, and increase the contributions to the maintenance of the unfortunate clergy of that country, driven by these votaries of "Reason" and "Nature," at peril of their lives, from their plundered and blood-stained homes, to the hospitable shores of Britain. Of this intention she made no secret; and while employed on her task, she was thus again encouraged by her friend Lord Orford. "I am proud of having imitated you at a great distance, and been persuaded, much against my will and practice, to let my name be put to the second subscription for the poor French Clergy, as it was thought it might tend to animate that consumptive contribution. I am impatient for your pamphlet, not only as being yours, but hoping it will invigorate horror against French atheism, which, I am grieved to say, did not by any means make due impression. I did very early apply to your confessor,[1] to beg he would enjoin his clergy to denounce that shocking impiety." In the early part of 1793 the publication took

[1] The Bishop of London.

place under the title of "Remarks on the Speech of M. Dupont." In this tract, Mrs. More pointed out, in her lucid and forcible style, the danger of all intercourse with a people who had nationally been given up to such blind profaneness; the importance of a national and individual self-scrutiny in England, lest kindred vices and negligences might conduct our country to the awful gulf into which they had already precipitated her neighbour; and the necessity of submitting to any sacrifices, and making any exertions, rather than permit such principles to obtain currency and influence in a hitherto Christian land. To the "Remarks" was prefixed, "A prefatory Address to the Ladies, &c., of Great Britain, in behalf of the French Emigrant Clergy." It was Mrs. More's intention, as in other instances, to publish anonymously; but, on the strong remonstrance of the Bishop of London, she consented to prefix her name.

The dispersion of this tract was extensive, the profits of the sale amounting to about 240*l.*, which sum was paid to the committee for conducting the relief of the refugee ecclesiasticks. On the 17th of May 1793, at a meeting of the united committees of subscribers for that purpose, the following resolution was unanimously passed: —

"That the thanks of this committee be presented to Mrs. Hannah More, for having given up the profits of her excellent "Remarks on the Speech of M. Dupont," to the use of the French Emigrant Clergy; and likewise for her elegant and pathetick address to the ladies of Great Bri-

tain in their behalf, by which she has doubly contributed to this charitable work; and that the following extract from the same be published:

"'Christian charity is of no party. We plead, not for their faith, but for their wants. And let the more scrupulous, who look for desert as well as distress in the objects of their bounty, bear in mind that, if these men could have sacrificed their conscience to their convenience, they had not now been in this country. Let us shew them the purity of our religion by the beneficence of our actions.'"

The amount of good procured to the unhappy exiles by this address, and to the souls of the people of England by the refutation of Dupont, are among "the secret things" which shall never be known till the counsels of all hearts shall be manifested. One advantage achieved was, undoubtedly, the disabuse of many amiable but mistaken persons, who, except upon evidence equal to demonstration, could not be brought to think so ill of human nature as to believe it capable of the follies and atrocities which common report attributed to the French authorities. The publick butcheries and proscriptions were too notorious to be questioned, and it was equally certain that some of the men who directed the national affairs, were monsters of atrocity; still many thought it incredible that an assembly, numbering a considerable proportion of educated men, could approve, however they might find it impossible to check, the enormities of a few brutal leaders, whom the

ferment of political commotion had thrown from the dregs of society to its surface. It was not sufficiently adverted to that a high degree of mental culture by no means necessarily involves immunity from the grossest errors in religion and morals, and that the pollutions which had characterized every stage of the French Revolution, could be referred to no more probable origin than the rejection of that God whom it so conspicuously dishonoured. While the infidel, the libertine, and the profligate beheld with apprehension the increasing disgust excited by the Jacobins through all gradations of British society, there was still a class of a very different description, who, discrediting the existence of a nation of atheists as an impossibility, and, consequently, as a mere factious exaggeration, gave the weight of their influence and respectability to the infidel and anarchical party in England. Several English periodicals in the interests of the revolutionists aided the delusion by advocating the cause in a style of great moderation, affecting, if not zeal, still regard for religion, and quoting the least offensive parts of Paine and Woolstoncraft, till well-intentioned but credulous people began to disbelieve the allegations of their better instructed and constitutional countrymen. The remarks on the speech of Dupont completely dispersed these errors. Great part of the speech was printed by Mrs. More with the remarks; and the date of the document, the reference to the French journal in which it appeared, and the account there given of the

applause that interrupted and followed it, left no room for scepticism, except in minds wilfully obstinate. The Christian favourers of the Revolution deserted in disgust, and the line was drawn broadly in the right place,—between the friends and enemies of united truth and social order. It is supposed that the influence of this tract produced, in addition to the actual profits of sale, subscriptions to the amount of not less than 1000*l.* to the support of the emigrant clergy. Nor was the beneficence of Hannah More towards these victims of infidel intolerance limited to pleading their cause, and contributing, by the effort of her pen, a noble accession to their relief. For many years, while she spent the winters with her sisters at Bath, the house was constantly open to these unfortunate men, who always found there an hospitable welcome.

It could scarcely be expected that a tract so animated and popular as the Remarks on Dupont should be unopposed; and the character of those who were likely to oppose it would not naturally prepare us to expect the mildest description of opposition. Nothing can be more illustrative of Mrs. More's Christian temper than the following extract of a letter addressed to Mr. Cadell in August 1793:—"I have had no less than three answers to the pamphlet; one *very abusive indeed;* but so diverting *that I have assisted the sale by causing my friends to buy it.*" I have never been able to meet with more than one of these replies, which is, evidently, written by a dissenter, and, apparently, a dissenting minister. It is not abu-

sive, but very heavy; and there is nothing in it approaching to what can be called "*diverting*," unless we should except two specimens of theology, which, however gravely intended, may perhaps prove not unamusing to the reader.

Mrs. More, in addressing the ladies of Great Britain in favour of the exiled ecclesiasticks, had thus concluded:—"If you will permit me to press you upon such high motives (and it were to be wished that in every action we were to be influenced only by the highest), perhaps no act of bounty to which you may be called out can ever come so immediately and so literally under that solemn and affecting description which will be recorded in the great day of account, — '*I was a stranger, and ye took me in.*'"[1] The serious reply to this simple and Christian appeal is as follows: "It is to be lamented that, while our benevolence is justly excited by their [the priests'] destitute circumstances, the intermixture of political opinions and prejudices into their case should so far warp your jugdment, Madam, as to consider these men the immediate representatives of Christ himself. '*I was a stranger, and ye took me in,*' are words appropriated to *the brethren of Christ.* All men stand not in this relation, otherwise none would be found at his left hand." It would have been curious if this writer had gone on to favour us with the requisites for entitling a stranger to admission on this ground, and the means whereby

[1] Matt. xxv. 35.

his readers should infallibly know who should be found at the left hand. In that case, his own little sect, and "the brethren of Christ," would have maintained, we may suspect, a tolerably strict identity. The *good* Samaritan is, upon this shewing, a misnomer; for, believing, as he must have done, the Jew to be in grievous error, he ought to have known better than to treat him as a brother. We must conclude his "judgment" to have been "warped," and the precept, "Go and do thou likewise,"[1] to be utterly inapplicable to the enlightened days of Dupont.

The other observation of this champion of the new school of Christianity is that with which he concludes, and into which he seems to think he has thrown the whole force of his irresistible arguments. "I entreat you," is his language to Mrs. More, "to weigh the advice of the wise and eloquent Jewish doctor, whenever you contemplate the affairs of the French nation. 'Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for, if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but, if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.'" To represent the work of the French *exterminators* of Christianity in the words applied to its first *propagators*, and to describe Mrs. More, when combating *Atheism* and *Atheists*, as *fighting against God*, is certainly an original line of argument. It is needless, perhaps, to indicate, that, by neces-

[1] Luke x. 37.

sary consequence, Dupont is a champion of the Deity, whose existence he impiously denies; and his speech, a valuable little manual of theology. It is impossible to doubt that arguments like these, with the reflecting and Christian people of England, urged home the simple and scriptural appeals of Hannah More with tenfold power. Such things are mentioned here as curiosities; for, although their absurdity, now that the effervescence which produced them has subsided, is manifest enough, there were not wanting then, among those who affected even a superiority both in liberality and enlightenment, such as seriously received such arguments as these for Christian charity and sound logick.

Among the benefits which it pleased the gracious Author of Christianity to derive to England from the country which denied His very existence, was a far clearer knowledge of the proofs on which the credit of His revelation rests. There were then in our country three numerous classes. One of these consisted of pious Christians, who possessed, indeed, the practical evidence of the truth of their religion, in that "peace of God, which passeth all understanding," and in its perfect adaptation to their wants and infirmities; but still were unable to give a reason of the hope that was in them, calculated to meet the cavils of the infidel. Another class was that of merely professed and nominal Christians, who were such only because they were born in a Christian country, who had no doubt of the truth of their religion, simply because

they had never thought on the subject, and who, consequently, would fall before an objection which a mere tyro in Christian evidence would despise. The third class was composed of actual waverers; men superficially acquainted with their Bible, imbued with the objections of the English infidels, especially the latest and most insidious, Hume and Gibbon, and regarding a small tinge of infidelity as a mark of difference from the vulgar, and giving them an air of enlightened superiority to credulity and superstition. To all these classes it might seem that the doctrines of the French sophists would be formidable, if not fatal. But God left not himself without witness. In the universities of our land, fenced by the cautious appointments of elder wisdom from the intrusion of heresy and schism, the pure deposit of the Christian record was religiously guarded by profound and varied learning. In the Church, deriving its supplies from those untainted springs, the same holy truths were preserved under the same tutelage. Accordingly, the press, the lecture-room, and the pulpit, became every where vocal with the evidences of Christianity, which, but for this aggression on revelation, would never have been called into publick notice. The simple were confirmed; the thoughtless were instructed; the freethinking coxcomb found out that Christianity had learning on its side; and that it was, consequently, no mark of superior information to disparage it. A more enlightened and more zealous Christianity immediately succeeded. Nor did that generation alone

reap the benefit of those Christian efforts which the assaults of the French revolutionists called forth. Works which will enlighten the Church to to the end of time, the evidential writings of Paley and Porteus, to mention no others, were providentially raised from the chaos of the French atheism:

"Νυκτὸς δ' αὖτ' αἰθήρ τε καὶ ἡμέρη ἐξεγένοντο."[1]

The most difficult task, however, was that of introducing the evidences of Christianity to the uneducated, to the perversion of whom the arts of the revolutionists were especially directed. An objection, which no person of ordinary Christian education could fail to confute as soon as uttered, was wholly unanswerable by the ignorant, who, even when apprised, required more time to comprehend the answer, than would suffice for imbibing a hundred infidel sophisms. The anti-religious writings of Paine are exactly of this kind; utterly innocuous to all readers of the smallest information,—dangerous in the extreme to the uninformed. Bishop Watson, in his admirable "Apology," had done good service by the demolition of "The Age of Reason." But his excellent tract was, after all, directed only against a particular work. Something was wanted which might at once instruct the poor, and put them on their guard; something which would enter into their habits of argument; something which would come

[1] Hesiod. Theog. 124.

home to their feelings, by which they are much more influenced than by even the simplest and clearest reasoning; something which would, in their minds, dispose of the whole question; something which would anticipate the enemy on his own ground, and rescue the poor on their own principles.

It was impossible not to see in the "Village Politicks" the eminent capability of Hannah More to render such a service; and none saw this more plainly than the first promoter of the good work, Bishop Porteus, who earnestly intreated her that, as she had already confuted the anarchists by "Village Politicks," she would now meet the infidels by a "Village Christianity." This suggestion was not *exactly* complied with; but to it, it is probable, we are indebted for the first idea of those admirable and valuable tracts which constitute "The Cheap Repository," a work which will be read and admired equally by the most unlettered and the most accomplished, while the English, and the various languages into which it has been translated, shall exist. Almost all the tracts of which it is composed have been republished by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and form a principal part of many an English cottager's library.

If the Bishop of London had the honour of suggesting the *idea* of the Cheap Repository, it is scarcely questionable that for the method and manner Mrs. More was again under obligation to Mrs. Trimmer, of whose "Family Magazine" the

Cheap Repository is almost a continuation. Having outrivalled her in her schools, Mrs. More felt encouraged to emulate her tracts; believing that she could, in this way, most effectively attain the purpose in contemplation, — to convey to the poor just notions of Christian evidence and obligations, in a vehicle at once intelligible and agreeable.[1] In conjunction with her sisters, and aided by some eminent literary persons, she arranged to publish every month a tale, a ballad, and a tract for Sunday reading. Sarah and Martha alone assisted in the literary part, the others helped with their purses. The tracts by Hannah are signed Z; those of Sarah, S.[2] Songs and tracts had been to a great extent influential in the corruption of the lower orders of France, and the same machinery was now worked by the revolutionists of England. It seemed therefore wise to employ this kind of weapon against the cause it had hitherto been principally instrumental to support. While hesi-

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[1] "To teach the poor to read, without providing them with *safe* books, has always appeared to me an improper measure; *and this induced me to the laborious undertaking of the Cheap Repository Tracts.*"—Mrs. More's letter to Bishop Beadon. It may be worth while here to notice a coincident sentiment of Sir Walter Scott:—"To make boys learn to read, and then place no good books within their reach, is to give men an appetite, and leave nothing in the pantry, save unwholesome and poisonous food, which, depend upon it, they will eat rather than starve."—*Scott's Journal in Lockhart's Life*, vol. vi. chap. iv.

[2] It is, perhaps, needless to observe that the literary assistance granted to Mrs. More in the Cheap Repository was the contribution of *entire* pieces exclusively.

tating as to the expediency or probable utility of the design, she had a conversation at Bath with the Bishop of Dol, who afterwards fell by the guillotine. "Penny papers," said he, "might have saved France, and so I told the king." This at once decided and encouraged her. Penny papers unquestionably contributed to the salvation of England; and none were more blessed to that object than those of Hannah More.

In reply to a letter which accompanied a prospectus of this work, Lord Orford writes, "Thank you a thousand times for your most ingenious plan! may great success reward you!" "I repeated some of the facts you told me of the foul fiends and their anti-More activity. I sent to Mr. White for a dozen more of your plans, and will distribute them wherever I have hopes of their taking root and blossoming. To-morrow I will send him my subscription, and I flatter myself you will not think it a breach of Sunday; nor will I make this long that I may not widen that fracture. Good night! How calm and comfortable must be your slumbers on the pillow of every day's good deeds!"

In 1795 appeared the first number of "The Cheap Repository." The title seems to have been selected as an invitation to the class whose especial profit was contemplated; and it was an object with the sisters to reduce the price below that of the infidel and Jacobinical trash, which was then so current in the market. For this purpose, a continued subscription was necessary; nor was any difficulty found in procuring the assistance

required. The French committee had conducted their perversion of the lower orders by large gratuitous issues of their publications to country hawkers and pedlars; and it was thought that such a disposal of the Cheap Repository tracts would not be inexpedient. Two committees, accordingly, were formed in London for the dispersion of the work, and every encouragement was given by the bishops, clergy, and all friends of religion and order. In particular, the Bishop of London assisted and encouraged the circulation, which was, perhaps, unprecedented, two millions being sold in the first year of publication.

The tales of the Cheap Repository bear so manifestly the stamp of nature and truth, that it cannot be doubted that many of them are little more than a narrative of facts. That, for instance, of the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, is well known to be the detail of a real transaction. The "Mr. Johnson" is Sir James Stonhouse; the shepherd's name was Saunders; and his simple cottage on Cherril Down, Wilts, represented in the vignette, is still pointed out to the traveller as a classical spot. In "The Sunday School," and "Hester Wilmot," we have a picture, little embellished, and not at all overcharged, of the opposition which Mrs. More had to encounter among farmers and parents, and of the steady and prudent policy by which it was overborne. "Mrs. Jones" appears nearly related to "Mrs. Andrews," the heroine of the Family Magazine. In "The Two Wealthy Farmers" we have the description of both the

evil and the good, which Mrs. More found in the agricultural classes; and it is not unlikely that her adventures at Wedmore supplied some features to the admirable picture of "Tawney Rachel." It is probable that the *name* of Hester Wilmot was suggested by those of MM. Hester and Wilmot respectively, the secretary and chairman of the united committees for the relief of the French clergy. "Mr. Fantom" had, doubtless, many prototypes in the class of petty shopkeepers; among whom, whatever may have been the cause, discontent, self-conceit, and extravagances in religion and politicks, were too frequently found, and often in direct proportion to the worldly prosperity of the individual. The study was easily met with; but the picture required the hand of a consummate artist. Never did Rembrandt dispose his lights and shadows with more artful and powerful effect, than Mrs. More, in her delineation of Mr. Fantom. "A mind at once shallow and inquisitive, speculative and vain, ambitious and dissatisfied." "He prated about narrowness and ignorance, and bigotry, and prejudice, and priestcraft, and tyranny, on the one hand; and, on the other, of public good, the love of mankind, and liberality, and candour, and toleration, and, above all, benevolence." "The more the word *liberality* was in his mouth, the more did selfishness gain dominion in his heart." "A life of talking, and reading, and writing, and disputing, and teaching, and proselyting, now struck him as the only life." "The object of a

true philosopher," he says, "is to diffuse light and knowledge. I wish to see the whole world enlightened." Yet this enlightened philanthropist neglects every duty of common humanity, leaves his neighbour's cottage and children to burn, while he is devising means of extinguishing the fires of the Inquisition, and plunges his family and household into worse than pagan ignorance, till one of his servants, following out practically his master's *philosophy*, first robs the philosopher himself, and next earns, by murder, his title to the gallows. The rich vein of satire which throughout chastises the folly of ignorant and arrogant presumption can only be equalled by the awful and tragick solemnity in which the grand moral is enforced, that the Gospel is the only true enlightenment, and obedience to its precepts the highest philosophy. This tale, and the continuation published some years after, will be a valuable and instructive manual as long as such characters as Fantom shall prefer a brief, limited, and infamous notoriety, by wrecking the faith, hope, morals, and salvation of their fellow creatures, to that noble obscurity which is content to wait for fame till the great day which shall bring to the meanest follower of the Saviour a renown at once glorious, universal, and immortal.

Lord Orford had wished Mrs. More to wind up her remarks on Dupont by a notice of the fate of Manuel, then supposed to have been mortally wounded by some of his own accomplices in butchery. The progress of affairs in France had

increased the number of similar victims, and Lord Orford again urged Mrs. More to notice this providential retribution in her Cheap Repository. The hand of Providence was undoubtedly acknowledged by her in all these transactions; and if a scheme of temporal retribution yet linger upon earth, the crime of murder appears to be the occasion of its exercise; while murders so horrible as those which marked the track of the French revolution, perpetrated too in open rejection of His authority and existence who has declared that "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed,"[1] might well seem to warrant extraordinary interpositions; and the deaths of the monsters who had wrought them, brought about by inventions and creatures of their own, might, without superstition or irreverence, appear referable to those cases where "the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity"; when "the earth also shall disclose her *blood*, and shall no more cover her *slain*."[2] Mrs. More, however, probably reverted in thought to the massacre of the Galileans and the tower of Siloam[3], and forbore to avail herself of the moral, though every tale is conducted with strict dramatick justice, and uniformly presents sin and misery as cause and effect.

Not the least curious feature of this publication is the complete acquaintance with cottage economy which it exhibits, at a time when the knowledge

[1] Gen. ix. 6. [2] Isa. xxvi. 21. [3] See Luke, xiii. 1. *seq.*

of that science was chiefly to be gained by experience and reflection. By some it is commonly received as indisputable that a literary woman must be a bad economist; and it may be readily allowed that a *passion* for literature, like a *passion* for dress or dissipation, or any thing else, may estrange a woman from the knowledge of household affairs. Such, however, was not the case in the instance of Hannah More. In the "Cure for Melancholy" we have a series of cheap plans for ameliorating the condition of the poor, which must have been the result of careful consideration, and which, in all probability, Mrs. More, to whom her heroine Mrs. Jones bears close resemblance, had actually practised herself; while in "The Way to Plenty" the poor are instructed how to make the best of their means, and receipts for cheap dishes are furnished, which Mrs. More must have partly gained by inquiry among the cottagers, or invented and tried herself, although she was, in all probability, indebted for some suggestions to Mrs. Trimmer's "Economy of Charity," particularly for the idea of the soup-kitchen. Certain it is that the benefits of the Cheap Repository were not exclusively religious and political. By it the poor were taught, during the scarcity of 1795, to economize where they had been accustomed to waste; a lesson of more value than the large sums which Mrs. More actually disbursed in charitable objects; and, doubtless, many an honest labourer had reason to bless the name of Hannah More, for finding, through the exercise of an economy of which he had before entertained no

conception, more comforts in a season of dearth than he had ever been able to enjoy before in years of the greatest abundance.

No production of Hannah More had so much evinced the flexibility of her genius, or inculcated so widely and forcibly the good principles it was written to maintain, as the Cheap Repository. It became a favourite with high and low, educated and unlearned. It was soon necessary to bring it out in two forms; one for the hawkers, and a superior style of print and paper for the higher classes. Many important moral results were directly traceable to its influence. At Bath, the colliers had organized operations for a direct attack on the mills, and afterwards on private property, when, by the timely distribution of the ballad of "The Riot" among them, they were convinced of their folly, and abandoned their design. The same ballad was also instrumental in suppressing a tumult at Hull. The Repository was actively disseminated by all friends of order and morality; it was forthwith translated into the French and Russian languages. The government itself saw its great importance; and it is probably to this and her other anti-revolutionary productions, that Mrs. More chiefly owed her introduction to the Duchess of Gloucester, who always remained her warm friend and patroness; and hence her acquaintance with the Royal Family, on which subject more will be said presently.

Though not, perhaps, the most valuable of the testimonies received by Mrs. More on this occasion, not the least curious, certainly, is that of the

late William Cobbett, with whom, at that time, religion and social order happened to be in favour. He wrote from America, requesting a copy of the Cheap Repository, which Mrs. More immediately sent to him. The following is his acknowledgment, which, as never having yet, so far as I am aware, been published, the reader may not deem unacceptable:

"My dear Madam,

The Repository I have read with delight. Though a father, I find I am not too old to stand in need of the learning to be acquired from such lessons. They must have produced infinite good in Britain. I trust they will contribute largely to render the succeeding generations better than the present, and to preserve *our* country from the dreadful scourge which we have seen immorality and irreligion bring on so many of her neighbours. It is a blessing almost peculiar to our favoured island to produce numbers of persons of extensive benevolence and indefatigable industry in its pursuit; but, among them all, that have come to my knowledge, I know not one who has a higher claim to *pre-eminence* than *yourself*. For my part, Madam, I shall ever think you entitled to my respect and gratitude. My children and those of my brethren may probably owe their happiness here and hereafter to your incomparable efforts. May your life be unembittered with sickness or sorrow, and may it be prolonged till you have seen your labours rewarded by the reformed *morals* of those for whom you have written. I have the honour to be, with the most sincere respect, Madam,

Your obliged and humble servant,

"WILLIAM COBBETT."

During the publication of the Cheap Repository, Mrs. More had the misfortune to lose one of those friends who had most powerfully encouraged and assisted it,—the Earl of Orford; with whom she had maintained a close friendship and correspondence for more than twenty years. This connection has been made matter of reproach to

Hannah More, both by friends and enemies; her admirers thinking it unworthy of one whose character and sentiments were so different from his; while her adversaries would infer an inconsistency between her principles and professions. But Mrs. More's conduct is capable of a very easy vindication. Mr. Walpole, from the first occasion when he met Miss More in the society to which his connections and literary pursuits introduced him, had entertained the highest esteem for her character and talents, and received the greatest delight in her conversation. His demeanour towards her was ever most courteous, gentlemanly, and respectful, and it would have been more difficult to justify her had she met this behaviour otherwise than she did. Had there, indeed, been any compromise,— any qualification of her views to conciliate his approbation by the sacrifice even of a shadow of principle, defence would have been impossible. But the fact was notoriously otherwise. She was so far from lowering the tone of her religion, or countenancing his religious apathy, that she studiously omitted no occasion of preventing mistake on the subject. Her walk in the eye of the great had always been a living commentary on her "Thoughts on their Manners," and "Estimate of their Religion." With Christian prudence, indeed, she did not perpetually obtrude on Mr. Walpole the subject of religion; and those who would complain that she does not write alike to him and Mr. Wilberforce, are rather well meaning than judicious. A religious letter would probably have appeared to the superficial flutterer

nothing more than cant and vulgarity; and disgusted with the author, and especially with her religion, he would have been only confirmed in his indolence and negligence. Her views were known to Mr. Walpole, through books, which left no room for retreat or equivocation; through her scrupulous sanctification of the Sabbath under all circumstances, and in defiance of all obstacles; and, above all, through an heroick beneficence, to which captiousness itself could take no exceptions. These things were, indeed, likely to dispose her flippant friend to serious views; and the wisdom of her course appeared in the result. While the absence of all compromise on her part is evident in the bantering style in which he addresses her,[1] the respect with which her virtues had inspired him is no less evident in the language which he holds to her[2], and in the readiness with which he always contributed to the furtherance of her plans of philanthropy. To Mrs. More he was indebted for his introduction to the excellent Bishop Porteus, in whose life and conversation Christianity beamed with her cheerful native lustre, and whose intercourse, which Lord Orford highly valued, was every way calculated to benefit him. In Hannah More and Bishop Porteus he had the opportunity of seeing that the most implicit faith and the most devoted zeal in Christianity could consist with the highest mental attainments; and that the

[1] "My dear Saint Hannah," "My holy Hannah," &c.
[2] "Most excellent of women," &c.

most devoted piety was no obstacle to cheerfulness and humour. That the friendship of Mrs. More and of the Bishop of London was productive of spiritual advantage to Lord Orford, there is every reason to believe; and, were it otherwise, it were equally unjust to Mrs. More and the Bishop, to blame either for maintaining an intimacy likely to operate such a result. Certain it is that the most pious and stedfast Christian in England could not be more revolted by the blasphemies of the French infidels, than was Lord Orford. One of his latest acts, indeed, towards Mrs. More proves the influence which she had acquired, the respect which her principles had elicited, and the good which she had wrought. He informed her by letter that by her he had been first led to read and *study* the Scriptures; and at the same time presented her with a Bible, dedicated with the following inscription:

To his excellent Friend
Miss Hannah More,
this Book;
which he knows to be the dearest Object of her Study,
and by which,
to the great comfort and relief
of numberless afflicted and distressed Individuals,
she has profited beyond any person with whom he is acquainted;
is offered,
as a mark of his esteem and gratitude,
by her sincere
and obliged humble Servant,
Horace, Earl of Orford,
1795.[1]

[1] This inscription has been very obligingly communicated to me by Lord Teignmouth, in whose possession the Bible now is.

The Cheap Repository was closed in 1798, Mrs. More finding the labour greater than her constitution could sustain. Not only was she, as we have seen, during all this time conducting several parochial and Sunday schools, but she had even been engaged for some years[1] in another important literary undertaking.

From the critical point of Mrs. More's life, at which she had resolved on the solemn dedication of all her powers to the glory of her God, through the promotion of a reformed education in all classes, she seems to have projected an express treatise on the instruction of the upper and middle ranks of her own sex. In the third chapter of her "Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World," she had adverted with distinctness and decision to the prevalent defects in the education of young men; but female education was far more defective, and the province more appropriate; nor were the consequences involved fewer or less important. Her schools for the poor, and her observations on the general education of the higher orders, were parts of a great system which needed completion only in a specifick treatise on female education. Her experience from childhood had exhibited to her at once the nature and remedy of popular errors on this subject; and the progress of the French Revolution had conferred on her

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[1] It appears from notes (Works, vol. v. p. 3, 69, &c.), that the "Strictures on Female Education" had been begun "*early* in the French Revolution."

theories on education the character almost of an experimental philosophy. It had long been the aim of the French infidels to corrupt their country-women; sensible that, while piety and virtue were invested with female attractions, they could never be altogether eradicated from the bosom of man. Refined and sublimated licentiousness for the Court and the drawingroom had been supplied by Rousseau; brutal grossness, for the plain vulgar of town and country, was the contribution of Voltaire. With this corruption was skilfully blended a proportional admixture of antichristian scoffs and blasphemies. It had been also a part of the infidel tacticks to enlist as adepts women of influential rank, but abandoned character. A Bareith, a Du Deffand, and a D'Epinay, with several others, had been taken into the cabal, and had zealously promoted the depravation of their sex, and through that, the perversion of the other. One English female had voluntarily proclaimed herself a member of this alliance, and maintained in print the "rights" of her sex to reject their Bible, and follow no other guide than their wills and passions. Had the women of England become generally infected with the contagion, the total subversion of British religion and morals would have been inevitable; while the pious fulfilment of the important task assigned them in the economy of Providence would go far to retain, secured in the sacred treasure of the social affections, the allegiance of father and husband, of brother and son, to the Father and Husband of his people,—to

Him who styles himself the Son of Man, and who is not ashamed to call his followers brethren. Adverting to these important consequences, and to the direction imparted to female influence by early discipline, Mrs. More instituted a searching and methodical inquiry into the objects of female education, and the proper means of attaining them. The principle of her reformation was to urge the cultivation of the mind rather than that of the body; of the soul rather than of the mind; and that of all for their proper destination; a course exactly the converse of that which had been popularly adopted in Mrs. More's early days, and which was far from extinct in the middle season of her life, if indeed it be so to be considered now. Her aim was to recal woman to the purposes of her being; to train her, so far as possible in this fallen state, to be (as she was designed) the image of her Creator, and "a help meet" for man. These objects had been neglected, and even opposed, in the female education of the day; and Mrs. More would have accomplished inestimable good, if she had only trained for quiet fireside happiness one immortal being, otherwise devoted to such misery as Pope's stern but faithful pencil has pourtrayed [1]; at once unhappy and mischievous; while, when contemplated as formed for eternity, the most melancholy spectacle imaginable; who, after having spent the prime of life in the restless enjoyment of

[1] "Yet mark the end of a whole sex of queens," &c.—
See *Moral Essays*, Ep. ii. 219—248.

self-admiration, and pursuit of the admiration of others, has at length reached the period when vanity itself can scarcely afford one consolatory whisper; when the mind has stored no refuge from such jeers as she was herself once wont to cast on those whom she now resembles; and when memory is opposed to hope, presenting no account of treasure accumulated for the eternal world, but only at best blanks of indolence, broken by records of folly. If Mrs. More be thought, in her "Strictures," to have depreciated some external accomplishments, it must be remembered that the exaggeration of their importance had been the great source of perversion in the female education of her time; that her aim was neither to banish them, nor to detract from their real value; but only to place them in just subordination to those essential and sterling qualifications which the system of the day neglected altogether, or imparted very inadequately.[1] A mind enriched and enlarged with

[1] The following passage is only one of many which ought to have precluded all mistake on the subject of Mrs. More's intentions. "Let me not, however, be misunderstood. The customs which fashion has established, when they are not in opposition to what is right, when they are not hostile to virtue, should unquestionably be pursued in the education of ladies. Piety maintains no natural war with elegance, and Christianity would be no gainer by making her disciples unamiable. Religion does not forbid that the exterior be made, *to a certain degree*, the object of attention; but the admiration bestowed, the sums expended, and the time lavished, on arts which add little to the intrinsick value of life, should have limitations. While these arts should be admired, let them not be admired *above their just value*; while they are practised, let it not be *to the exclusion of higher employ-*

true knowledge,—the knowledge of facts and of real life; with history, biography, travels; purified by all that is tender, beautiful, and elevated in poetry, yet invigorated by the study of a few choice masters of argument and reflection, would, surely, be more worthily and beneficially educated, than if suffered to let its powers run to waste in mere ornamental acquirements, or to imbibe from mischievous novels and romances false views of life and perversions of sentiment, incapacitating their miserable victim alike for the enjoyment and the communication of happiness. And if a rational education was necessary for rational beings, a spiritual education was still more indispensable for spiritual creatures; a truth, perhaps, though so

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ment; while they are cultivated, let it be to amuse leisure, *not to engross life.*"—*Strictures on Female Education*, Chap. iii. (Works, vol. v. p. 60.) While I am writing this, a letter from a lady who was educated in the Misses More's school, affords a characteristick illustration of Hannah More's views on the subject of external accomplishments at a very early period. The anecdote shall be given in the writer's own words. "A young lady was placed with the Misses More for education. Her eldest sister (who gave the relation herself) was invited to spend some time with them as a visitor. She had attained to considerable excellence in drawing, and as often as her drawings were exhibited, they drew forth much admiration. One person there always was present, who observed a strict silence, much to the mortification of the young artist; and that person was Hannah More. One morning this young lady made her appearance rather late at the breakfast-table. Her apology was this, that she had been occupied in *putting a new binding on her petticoat.* Mrs. Hannah More, fixing her brilliant eyes upon her with an expression of entire approbation, said, 'Now, my dear, I find you can employ yourself *usefully*, I will no longer forbear to express my admiration of your drawings.'"

little regarded in practice, sufficiently self-evident to all who admitted the reality of Christianity; but forced at that time on the attention of some, at least, even of the most thoughtless, by the pressure of events in France, which Mrs. More has finely converted to her great purpose in her stirring address to the matrons of the land: "Let that very period which is desecrated in a neighbouring country by a formal renunciation of religion, be solemnly marked by YOU to purposes diametrically opposite. Let that dishonoured era, in which *they* avowed their resolution to exclude Christianity from the national education, be the precise moment seized upon by *you* for its more sedulous inculcation; and while *their* children are systematically trained to 'live without God in the world,' let YOURS, with a more decided emphasis, be consecrated to promote his glory in it."[1]

Such was the object of the work on which, from the commencement of the infidel demonstrations in France, the leisure and labour of Mrs. More had been expended; and in order that she might lay a deep and broad foundation for so weighty a structure, she has, in her concluding chapters, presented us with the most copious and elaborate explication of the Christian faith to be found in her writings; while, to complete her scheme of right belief and pure practice, she has been earnest to insist on the devotional part of the Christian character, and has entered at great length on the

[1] Strictures on Female Education, ch. i. (Works, vol. v. p. 32.)

important subject of prayer, the distinguishing mark of the genuine and spiritual Christian, to say nothing of its important consequences.

Mrs. More's habit was always to work to the extent of her powers, both of body and mind; and her abandonment of the Cheap Repository was a sufficient reason to all who knew her for apprehending that her health had been more seriously affected by her multifarious and incessant labours than she was disposed to allow. The effects of these combined exertions on her frame had been, indeed, very injurious. She sometimes suffered, for whole successive days and nights, the most terrifick spasms in the head. On one occasion she was found by her sisters lying on her face, with her head against the wall of the apartment, bleeding, and apparently dead. She had become insensible from the violence of the paroxysm, and had fallen from her seat.

In 1799 Mrs. More's great work on Female Education appeared. It was intended, like its predecessors of the same family, to be published anonymously; but, at the suggestion of Mr. Alderman Cadell, Mrs. More consented to claim the authorship. It was originally to have been intituled, "Strictures on the Manners of Women of Rank and Fortune;" but it was ultimately designated, "Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education, with a View of the Principles and Conduct prevalent among Women of Rank and Fortune." Nothing could be more gratifying to the authoress than the reception of her labours.

Congratulations and compliments arrived from almost every name of religious or literary distinction; not a few from nobility, and even from Royalty. The Duchess (afterwards Queen) of Würtemburg openly avowed her intention of applying it to the education of the Duke's daughters. The work passed through thirteen editions, seven of which were printed in the year of its publication; and 19,000 copies have been printed in all.

Among the honours paid to this work, was one of a rather unusual character,—a formal recommendation in an episcopal charge. Of this, and of the Cheap Repository, Bishop Porteus thus speaks to his clergy:—

"Mrs. Hannah More, whose extraordinary and versatile talents can equally accommodate themselves to the cottage and the palace; who, while she is diffusing among the lower orders of the people an infinity of little religious tracts, calculated to reform and comfort them in this world, and to save them in the next, is, at the same time, applying all the powers of a vigorous and highly-cultivated mind to the instruction, improvement, and delight of the most exalted of her own sex. I allude more particularly to her last work on Female Education, which presents to the reader such a fund of good sense, of wholesome counsel, of sagacious observation, of a knowledge of the world and of the female heart, of high-toned morality, and genuine Christian piety, and all this enlivened with such brilliancy of wit, such richness of imagery, such variety and felicity of allusion,

such neatness and elegance of diction, as are not, I conceive, easily to be found combined and blended together in any other work in the English language.

"Of her little tracts no less than two millions were sold in the first year; and they contributed, I am persuaded, very essentially to counteract the poison of those impious and immoral pamphlets which, as I have already stated, were dispersed over the kingdom in such numbers by societies of infidels and republicans."

Notwithstanding the great popularity of the "Strictures," and the high recommendations under which it appeared, one passage did not escape without publick animadversion from a friendly quarter. The Rev. Charles Daubeny, minister of Christchurch, Bath, and afterwards Archdeacon of Sarum, published a letter to Mrs. More, remonstrating on the tendency of a position laid down in the xx.th chapter, that the duties of Christians grow out of its doctrines, "as the natural and *necessary* productions of such a living root."[1] This statement Mr. Daubeny impugned as unscriptural, and leading to the conclusion, that, belief once established, works would so necessarily ensue, that any care upon the subject would be superfluous. Mr. Daubeny's letter, written in the mildest and most Christian tone, and expressing the highest admiration of Mrs. More and her services to her church and country, was met by

[1] Works, vol. v. p. 418.

some of her friends in a very different spirit; and ignorance of Scripture and of the articles of the Church, "illiberality," "peevish jealousy," "absurdity," and many qualities of equal excellence, imputed to its writer without reserve, in a strain betraying more of party acrimony against Mr. Daubeny than of solicitude for the credit of Mrs. More, of whose character and writings the learned author of "The Guide to the Church" was an avowed and zealous admirer.[1] It is certain, indeed, that Mrs. More never intended to affirm the proposition which Mr. Daubeny opposes; and Mr. Daubeny did not hesitate to admit that such was his belief from her recorded opinions elsewhere. "Convinced as I am," he says, "from the tenour of your writing, that we are *in perfect*

[1] "The language of flattery, Madam, is not the language in which I profess to deal. It is neither consistent with my character as a minister, nor is it suited to my way of thinking as a man. When I say, therefore, that it must have been my own fault had I not, upon the perusal of your writings from time to time, derived both pleasure and edification, I hope to be understood as speaking the plain truth."—*Daubeny's Letter to Mrs. More*, p. 1. "No one who regards this lady [Mrs. More] with the respect to which she is entitled for her zeal for the honour of God and the welfare of the community, but must remark with reluctance, that in writings confessedly containing so much of what is excellent and truly spiritual any doctrine should be met with not perfectly sound."—*Appendix to Guide to the Church, concluding letter.* To treat a man who could write thus as an envious defamer of Hannah More was any thing but liberality, or, indeed, justice. To prejudice Mrs. More against him was worse. It is painful to reflect that one who did both these was worthy to have mediated, in a spirit more his own, even between Daubeny and Hannah More.

"Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?"

unison on the general subject of Christianity, it was not without sensible disappointment that I met with *a page* which conveyed to me a discordant sound. From the very decided language to be met with in some parts of your book, I am fully persuaded that on the doctrine of faith and works *there can be no real difference between us;* a circumstance which leads me to wish that we were as perfectly agreed in our *expressions* relative to it; for I am inclined to think that errors on this subject have been derived more from want of precision in language than from want of correctness in ideas." "It may be said, and with truth, that the general tenour of your publication is calculated to counteract an erroneous conclusion that may be drawn from one particular part of it, and that the decisive language contained in your xix.th chapter in favour of Christian practice, considered as what ought to be the constant object of Christian endeavour, precludes all apprehension of danger from the contrary conclusion. For this very reason, Madam, it were to be wished that no such part was to be found from which it was possible that a contrary conclusion could be drawn; because there are some readers who will pay more attention to one single passage that appears to favour their own preconceived opinions, whatever they may be, than to all the other passages in a book put together."[1] It was not, then, because Mr. Daubeny did not understand Mrs. More, but

[1] Daubeny's Letter, pp. 3, 43, 47.

because he thought she had expressed herself in a manner calculated to sap the foundation of the very doctrines she was inculcating, that he remonstrated against her phraseology. When the high and just influence of Mrs. More in the religious world is taken into the question; when the extensive circulation of the particular work is regarded; when it is recollected that the xx.th chapter of the "Strictures" is a deliberate confession of the author's faith, and the authority to which she referred all her friends for the knowledge of her religious opinions, — it seems somewhat hard measure to charge with illiberality and jealousy a man who had taken a vow "with all faithful diligence to banish and to drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines [1]," if he ventured to point out, in such a book, a passage which he conscientiously deemed to be of dangerous tendency [2],—especially as the doctrine which appeared to him to be expressed in it was actually that of a considerable and increasing school of religionists.

The proposition in question was evidently intended by Mrs. More to be none other than that of the xii.th article of the Church, as is clear from

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[1] Ordination Service.

[2] "It would be no credit either to my profession or understanding to possess a wish to find fault without having a reason that justified me to myself in so doing. The reason, in the present case, has been furnished by the decisive approbation which has accompanied your work, on the consideration that in proportion to the excellence of a publication will be the effect of any error that may be contained in it."—*Daubeny's Letter*, p. 45.

that article being quoted in a note in subsequent editions; still the *language* is far from identical. In the article, good works "spring out *necessarily* of *a true and lively faith;*" in Mrs. More's statement they "grow out of *the doctrines* as natural and *necessary* productions." A simple admission of *the doctrines*, therefore, would not only involve the obligation of the duties by logical consequence, but their practice by an imperious necessity. To remark this slight inaccuracy of *language*, where the true meaning is easily inferred from an ample context, would be hypercritical, except on a subject of such supreme importance as religious truth. It is probable, indeed, that the general bearing of Mrs. More work secured her meaning from any very extensive misconception. Mr. Daubeny, however, anticipated differently, and acted accordingly; and it is from a sense of justice to the memory of a pious Christian, a profound divine, a conscientious pastor of Christ's flock, and an invincible champion of his Church, as well as one who admired and *resembled* Hannah More [1],

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Mr. Daubeny's exertions at North Bradley, his evening lectures, Sunday schools, &c., and the courses taken by brutal rusticks and fanatical sectarians to thwart him, where even his buildings and plantations were destroyed through a simple hostility to civilization, form a complete parallel to Mrs. More's Cheddar and Wedmore adventures; while his munificent charities, his almshouses and his poorhouse, may compare even with her acts of beneficence. But the similitude is no where more complete than in his zeal for the religious benefit of the poor; the erection of the first free church in this country, containing 1,360 seats, being the result of his exertions.

that this notice has been extended. Whatever may be thought of the merits of Mr. Daubeny's argument, surely there ought to be but one opinion in regard to those of his motives. The conclusion of his letter is a perfect exemplification of that personal humility and official boldness in the clergyman which can be combined in no other character than the true Christian minister. "In making the foregoing remarks, Madam, I have, in my own judgment, discharged a duty. At the same time, when I consider that your late publication has received a publick testimony of approbation from one of the most distinguished prelates of our Church, it is not without a mixture of diffidence and respect due to so high an authority that I venture to submit them to your consideration. Conscious, however, of the integrity of my intention, it is not so much my wish that my interpretation of St. Paul be the true one, as that such interpretation may be established, which, in the judgment of pious and learned Christians, will do most justice to the Apostle's argument. As a fallible man, I shall readily acknowledge obligation to the person who shall convince me that I have been in error; being *desirous of taking a leaf out of any book whose object it is, by the propagation of Scripture doctrine, to promote what every minister of Christ ought to have at heart, the grand design of the* GOSPEL DISPENSATION."

The influence of the "Strictures on Female Education" is incalculable. Nineteen thousand copies, where every copy had at least a score of readers,

could not have been printed in vain. But, indeed, we have only to glance at the improved state of female education at the present day, to form some estimate of the effect of this book. The ardour for external accomplishments has not, perhaps, been greatly diminished; but the tone of female education, both intellectual and religious, has been materially raised. Even this view alone would afford only imperfect justice to the fruits of the "Strictures." Female education is an ample territory, embracing so many provinces, and abutting on so many important regions of morals, that it was impossible, even without any desire to transgress the legitimate limits of the subject, to improve it without great collateral benefits. In this small but comprehensive work, on which Mrs. More had expended the utmost care and labour, a moral picture of society was drawn, very different from what had been seen in that generation, and, by its native beauty, and accommodation to all that religion, reason, and good sense approve, too pleasing not to excite imitative zeal. Amid all the faults with which the present century is too justly chargeable, it is no less justly entitled to the praise of a more manly and rational character than its predecessor;—a character powerfully sketched by the hand of Hannah More, after her own just and vigorous conceptions, and, doubtless, finished after the portraiture of those whom she chose for her intimates and associates; but, certainly, no copy of the popular countenance. Her pen is therefore believed, with good reason,

to have contributed essentially to the favourable portion of the contrast, in which the later of the centuries which she has adorned stands to its precursor; to have been a prime instrument in reclaiming publick manners from frivolity and enervation to rational and intellectual dignity, no less than in recalling publick morals to their true standard in scriptural Christianity. Hitherto her ethical system, like the earliest sunbeams, had shed light on the high places alone; but, with the close of the 18th century, it crossed the moral horizon, and, like the advancing sun, invested with impartial light the middle regions of the social landscape. The humbler walks of life she had already instructed on a different though no less effectual plan. Thus then had she drawn the chain of truth and virtue around the whole frame of society; and the applause of an admiring world was but the echo of a pure conscience. Like the wisest of men, she had dared to prefer wisdom to riches and honour; and like him, too, she had received the object of her desire, while riches and honour were superadded. Blest with the love of many friends, and, above all, with the peace of God, she might seem to be the happiest of human kind; but such periods of unqualified serenity suit not long our probationary condition. The cloud was gathering, and we must now pursue its rise.

HOUSE AT BLAGDON, WHERE MRS. MORE OPENED HER SCHOOL.

"Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously."—1 *Pet.* ii. 21—23.

CHAPTER VII.

With the opening of the nineteenth century, the biographer of Hannah More enters on the only unpleasant portion of his duty; but a portion it is, and, therefore, cannot be evaded. The object of this chapter shall be the barest and simplest possible statement of uncontroverted facts, without the smallest attempt to adjust the balance of "the Blagdon controversy." In adopting this line, I am not influenced by the belief that Mrs. More was

wrong. That question is here undetermined. Were such the fact, the biographer's duty would still be to draw a portrait, not a model; and no private partialities could excuse a deviation from strict historical truth. The general excellence of Hannah More, therefore, would not be of itself a sufficient reason for suppressing any essential portions of her life which might really detract from it. But no person acquainted, even by hearsay, with the state of society in the neighbourhood of Blagdon during the agitation of this question could do otherwise than revolt with horror from the mere possibility of reviving it, especially at a time when the best energies of all true churchmen are required for defence against the common enemy, instead of being wasted in internal contentions. Apprehension of this is the only motive which induces me to give a less detailed view of the Blagdon controversy than my materials (which in this part of my narrative abound the most) would otherwise warrant. The reader will find no facts here specified but such as are admitted by those who advocated each side of the question; a question which should never have been adverted to, were it, in the opinion of the writer, possible altogether to decline it.

The Blagdon school had been founded in the year 1795, at the earnest solicitation of the Rev. Thomas Bere, curate of that parish, and a magistrate. The profligate condition of the parish, which, both as a magistrate and a minister, he had daily cause to lament, were urged by him to Mrs. More as a special reason for opening a school

there, and accepted by her as a sufficient motive for increasing labours and expenses which she had now resolved to limit, feeling them beyond her capabilities. Mrs. More paid particular attention to this school, and drew up for it a few pages of the most simple, beautiful, and affecting instruction, which might be very profitably reprinted for the use of our Sunday and National Schools. Extracts from this will be found in the Appendix (VI.) For some years she had no reason to repent of her extended labours. The Sunday evening readings brought the parents and adult relations of the children, and so altered was the character of this disorderly parish, that summonses, warrants, and indictments had almost disappeared.

Matters continued in this state until January 1799, when Young, the schoolmaster, introduced, in the Monday evening meetings, something resembling the class discipline of the Methodists. Questions were put on spiritual experience, and language held of an enthusiastick nature, while the young people assembled were encouraged in extemporaneous prayer. Mrs. Bere, the wife of the curate, attended one of these meetings herself, and was, she stated, personally insulted by the arrogant assumption of the schoolmaster, who told her, in the ominous language of a stormy period, she had not "*sought the Lord*" in the same way that the young people had done; boasted that he had the sanction of Mrs. More, and defied all opposition. During these proceedings Mrs. More

was with her sisters in Bath, suffering from a severe attack of ague. Mrs. Bere communicated the affair to Mrs. More, who, though unable herself to write to Mrs. Bere, desired one of her sisters immediately to reprimand Young severely, and insist on the immediate cessation of his irregularities. The better to guard against perversions for the future, the weekly instruction of adults by the schoolmaster was peremptorily forbidden, and the Sunday school and weekly school of industry alone retained. Writing to Dr. Whalley, she says, "For the slightest disobedience to this positive injunction, he [Young] shall, I assure you, be dismissed." The reproof took instant effect. The school continued to be conducted with order and efficiency; but so far was the patroness from wishing to maintain it without the full consent of the resident minister, that, on hearing it stated that Mr. Bere had preached against it, she offered immediately to close it. Mr. Bere, however, entreated she would not, saying, he had preached against enthusiasm, but not against the school.

All proceeded quietly until March 1800, when Mr. Bere preferred to Mrs. More, vouched on affidavit, an accusation against Young, to the effect that he had caused a young man in the neighbourhood not to enter into Mr. Bere's service, as he might make him sign away his right to the house and orchard. The charge was serious, and Mrs. More did not like to act till she had seen the affidavit, and ascertained the character of the deponent

both for veracity and sense. Being then in London, and just setting out for Kent, she trusted the representation of her cause to the hands of Sir Abraham Elton. This mediation Mr. Bere declined, and referred the matter to his rector, Dr. Crossman, avowing himself entirely friendly to the school, but objecting to the enthusiastick and sectarian proceedings of Young, which it does not appear had been repeated, while no allusion was made to Young's alleged insinuations against Mr. Bere's character. The Doctor recommended a communication with Mrs. More, and, in the event of this failing, Mr. Bere might punish Young's irregularities in his magisterial capacity. There can be no doubt that Mrs. More would have discharged the schoolmaster for any act of schismatical complexion; but she could not but feel that if Young was now discarded, his character would suffer in a still more material point; and that it was first necessary to establish that fact by evidence more conclusive than had been adduced. She now therefore opened a correspondence with Dr. Crossman, which was eventually laid before Dr. Moss, (the Chancellor of the diocese,) and the Bishop. The result of their decision on the subject was that Young ought to be dismissed; and the Chancellor wrote to Mrs. More to that effect.

The Bishop and Chancellor, in this award, appear to have contemplated Young's breaches of discipline only; Mrs. More's friends, however, on the scene of action, were desirous of rescuing him from the moral part of the charge. They insisted,

therefore, that the question of his dismissal should be referred to a local tribunal. Accordingly, five magistrates, three clergymen, and three private gentlemen, met at Blagdon for the purpose. It does not appear that the fact of Young having traduced Mr. Bere came before this assembly after all; but the result was that all agreed that no such imputation could attach to Mr. Bere. The abolition of the private school was recommended, and the dismissal of the schoolmaster also, unless Mr. Bere should approve his continuance. To this recommendation Mrs. More immediately deferred; and, on the 16th of November, 1800, the school was dissolved, with the following address, for a copy of which I am indebted to the kindness of one of Mrs. More's friends:—

"It is with no small concern I have to inform you that we shall meet no more in this place. The Sunday school and the evening reading, the weekly school of industry, all is at an end. Before we part, it is but justice to you to declare that my sister and I have never had more comfort from the teachable and dutiful behaviour of any children, nor more satisfaction from the sober and decent conduct of any parents, than we have experienced in this place; and we shall never withdraw our good opinion from a parish in general from the misconduct of a *very very* few, and those of the lowest and worst description. I do not wish to inflame, but to compose and reconcile you; your business is not to dispute, but to *submit*. You will give the best proof that you have profited by our

instructions and those of your master by carrying the religion you have been taught on Sunday into the business of the week, and the behaviour of your daily life. I shall hold that person's religious profession very cheap indeed who is not hereafter sober, peaceable, industrious, and forgiving. Be diligent in your attendance at church twice a day. Shew that you 'fear God,' by keeping His commandments and reverencing His ministers; shew that you 'honour the King' by submitting to all that are in authority under him, especially to magistrates. Mr. Young has proved himself, during eight years service, an honest and upright man, and an able and faithful schoolmaster. You are greatly indebted to him, and can reward him in no other way but by living in such a manner as shall be a credit to his instructions. He will continue in this place, of which he is a parishioner, till he can settle himself elsewhere; but I earnestly request that, though you treat him as a kind friend and neighbour, you do not, either by many or by few, resort to him for instruction. Young men! let me exhort you to be sober-minded: avoid the snares and corruptions of the world, against which you have been so long guarded, and to which, at your season of life, you will be so much exposed.

"My young women! so long the objects of our tender care and concern! I commit you to the protection of God. He can, and I trust He will, raise up better friends than we have been to you. In any case He will Himself be your friend if you walk in the paths in which you have been trained.

He will never leave you nor forsake you. As those hours on Sunday evenings which you have been accustomed to pass in this house are the seasons of greatest dangers to your youth and ignorance, watch well, I beseech you, over yourselves. You are now furnished with Bibles; you have been taught to read and to understand them; so that, if you now fall into sin, you will no longer have the former excuse of ignorance to plead. We have this day repeated our annual gift of forty Bibles and Common Prayer-books, the usual number of Bishop Gastrell's 'Institutes,' Bishop Beveridge's 'Private Thoughts,' Doddridge's 'Rise and Progress of Religion,' for the elder, with some hundreds of Cheap Repository and other small tracts, for younger ones. To the use of these you must add prayer to God for His grace and direction. Though what little we have done here is mixed with much imperfection, yet I trust the general design and tendency of it has been right. We shall never think of the five years that are past without being thankful for what has been done, and without wishing we had done more and better. To the principal farmers and heads of the parish we are obliged for their approbation and countenance of the school, and their kindness to the master and mistress. Being willing to leave a last testimony of our regard to the poor, we have deposited in the hands of your respectable churchwarden five guineas, to be applied to a general subscription, in case the scarcity should make such a measure necessary, or otherwise to

be disposed of at his direction and that of the vestry."

The Chancellor and Dr. Crossman were not, it seems, aware at the time of their decision that the irregularities complained of had already been suppressed by Mrs. More, and that no new instances had occurred after such suppression; but, on obtaining this information, they viewed the matter in another light, and the rector, at the instance of his Bishop, ordered the dismissal of Mr. Bere from the curacy, and requested Mrs. More to reopen the school, which was accordingly done on the 25th of January 1801. On this occasion she thus addressed the parents of the school children:—

"When I last parted from you in this place, I did not expect that I should ever meet you here again; but it has pleased God to order it otherwise. At the earnest request of the Rev. Dr. Crossman, your worthy rector, my sister and I have at last consented to open the school once more. As I parted from you with real concern, so it is with much satisfaction I call you together again. It is your part to increase and confirm that satisfaction by your sober and religious conduct. On your behaviour and that of your children depends the continuance of our future kindness and of the school itself. Let me beg of you to remember that religion is not a thing of words, but of deeds; that it is not so much to be known by *professions* as by the heart and life. If you feel the pleasure at the *restoration* of the

school, which I have reason to expect from the sorrow you expressed at the *loss* of it, let that pleasure be discovered in a quiet, modest, sober, christian-like manner. Think not of the *past* but as a means of exciting your gratitude for the present, and your diligence for the future; and remember that peaceableness, kindness, and brotherly love are among the best fruits of Christianity. Be diligent in sending your children constantly and early. Confirm the instructions they receive at school by setting them good examples at home; and let no other strife exist in the parish of Blagdon but who shall be the best subject of the King, the best member of the established Church, the honestest man, the soberest woman, and the sincerest Christian."[1]

After the restoration of the school it was found that Mr. Bere, having committed no ecclesiastical or moral offence, could not be legally deprived of his licence; he therefore continued to keep possession of the curacy; and, after various movements on both sides, irrelevant to the present narrative, a reconciliation took place between the rector and his curate, and the Bishop and his Chancellor acquiesced in Mr. Bere's retention of the appointment. Accordingly, in August 1801, Mrs. More, finding Mr. Bere's hostility continue, stated to Dr. Crossman her fixed resolution to dissolve the school, as it had been her invariable practice never to

[1] For this beautiful appeal I am indebted to the same obliging friend who communicated the former address.

maintain one without the full consent and countenance of the resident officiating minister; and this determination was carried into effect in September.

During all these transactions, and for some time after, a furious contention was desolating the peace of Blagdon and its neighbourhood, and even ringing its alarm to the ends of the kingdom. The British Critick and the Anti-Jacobin Review, both publications sincerely devoted to the cause of true religion and constitutional liberty, were, on this occasion, opposed. Pamphlets of the most violent character appeared on both sides: the charities and courtesies of social life were suspended between families associated by the great bond of coincidence of sentiment on all important subjects; opponents in the Blagdon controversy could not safely be invited to meet at the same table; and the hospitable meeting,—exclusively composed as it thus became of persons who thought alike on this subject, and who felt too deep an interest in it to talk of any other,—no longer enlarged and exercised the intellectual powers and the kindly affections, but degenerated into a mere cabal, where irretrievable time was worse than wasted in cherishing bitter and factious animosities against those, who, identified in principle, disagreed on the nature of a particular transaction.

Three questions, utterly distinct, were involved in this debate. The conduct of Mr. Bere; the conduct of Mrs. More; and the character of her religious views. With the first of these, this

volume is altogether unconcerned. The second, the reader must infer from the facts alone. The last is inseparable from the task of the biographer; but even here he is under no necessity of stirring the embers of that frightful feud. The question, though temporarily involved in that controversy, has no necessary connection with it, and is to be examined on its own merits. It would, perhaps, do violence to our narrative to enter on the matter here; and the reader is therefore referred for a more general discussion of the subject to the concluding chapter.

During the trying progress of the Blagdon controversy, Mrs. More put forth no publick defences or refutations; she never interfered to check injudicious friends, or to censure calumnious enemies. She left her cause quietly to make its own way. The spirit in which she acted appears from the addresses already cited. Though deeming herself wronged by Mr. Bere, she uses no acrimonious language against the individual, while she inculcates submission to the magistrate, and reverence to the parish priest. All is mild, calm, and conciliatory.

It is highly honourable to Mrs. More that all her gentlemanly and Christian opponents on this occasion (and candour requires the admission that such were several of them) never failed to speak in the most encomiastick terms of her worth and labours in every other instance; while those whose cowardice and mendacity did not hesitate to resort for their equipment to the armoury of calumny,

brought no charges against her but such as were altogether preposterous and incredible. Three of her respectable antagonists shall here be noticed. The Anti-Jacobin Review (July 1801) says, "*We think as highly of, and, we trust, we appreciate as justly, the general exertions of Mrs. More in behalf of religion, morality, and social order as the warmest of her friends.*" "We have been compelled to censure a lady *who has* ALWAYS STOOD VERY HIGH IN OUR ESTEEM, *whose works we have read* WITH INFINITE PLEASURE AND SATISFACTION, *and whose laudable efforts, by her literary productions, to meliorate the minds of the lower, and to improve the morals of the higher classes of society, entitle her to* THE MOST GRATEFUL THANKS OF ALL WHO, WITH US, FEEL THEIR VALUE AND ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR IMPORTANCE." In a pamphlet directed against her schools, the writer says, "I am of opinion it would be a blessed thing, both for the rising part of the present generation and for that which is descending, if there were an Hannah More in every parish." Another opponent says, "*I see Mrs. Hannah More in the light of* A PURE MORALIST *and* A ZEALOUS CHRISTIAN; and, though I entertain many exceptions against the unqualified nature of her institutions, and a certain spirit which is peculiar to them, yet, with THE WORLD, *I admire the elegance, and admit* THE GREAT MERIT AND UTILITY, OF HER LITERARY WORKS; nor can I suspect, with some, that she seeks for aggrandisement, or the gratification of shining in pomp at the head of her institutions; the golden means of driving the fashionable routes

of the great, or diversifying, when she pleases, publick splendour for [with] the retirement of her elegant villa:

> "Those happy means! that gild the charming scene,
> The rustick raptures of her Cowslip Green!"

or, seriously, with others, who would have us ridiculously to imagine that she is the instrument of revolutionists, to bring schism into our Church, and our constitution into ruins."[1] While such was the language of honest and honourable criticks and controversialists, a different class overshot their aim by disgusting every decent and well-regulated mind with their impure scurrilities. One was so degraded as to post a bill at the turnpike at Blagdon, in which the Misses More and their friends were *advertized* in the character of a menagerie.[2] Another, by the grossness of his language, made his book unreadable by any person of decency; while a third, combining the buffoonery and filth of his two predecessors, superadded the most libellous allegations, in which he

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[1] The Something Wrong developed, p. 5, 6.

[2] "Just imported from Barbary, by Baron Munckhausen [Baron Descury], a large collection of strange beasts, which the Baron has had the honour of exhibiting before the Bishop of London, and his *party*, with great applause, and may be seen at any time of the day, in a new-built caravan, at the sign of the *Green Cowslip*, in the parish of Wrington, at 13½*d.* each. No money returned. The collection consists of *five female savages* [the Misses More] of the most desperate kind, *one black bear* [Mr. Bere], which they wounded with a poisoned dart while he was guarding his young ones," &c. &c.

had the insolence to call a "Life of Hannah More." But by nothing did this class of writers more effectually defeat their object than by their hasty forgetfulness of the moral poet's prudent counsel,—

> "Lest men suspect your tale untrue,
> Keep PROBABILITY in view."[1]

Never, assuredly, was this canon of fiction more flagrantly violated than when the authoress of "Village Politicks" and "The Cheap Repository Tracts" was charged with *disloyalty* and *jacobinism*, and with "*not believing one word of Christianity!*" The irregularities of the schoolmaster at Wedmore, as well as those of Young, were considered a triumphant proof of Mrs. More's *methodism*, at the very time that the methodists were assailing her for emptying their meeting-houses. Like Socrates, while she was endeavouring to communicate practical knowledge for the conduct of life, it was her fate to be charged with introducing novelties in religion, and corrupting the youth. One of her most violent assailants does not hesitate to call her liberality to the school-children in the distribution of food and clothing by the gravely-sounding names of "bribery and corruption!" while, in a letter obligingly communicated by the lady to whom I am indebted for the Blagdon addresses, Mrs. More states that one of her opponents had publickly and unscrupulously averred that *she had hired two men to shoot him*, and that *she had been concerned with Charlotte Corday in the*

[1] Gay, Fable xviii.

assassination of Marat! The conclusion of this letter, as illustrative and characteristick, may be not unwelcome to the reader: "The preposterousness of the charges is calculated to diminish the keenness of one's feelings; and that such men should have found advocates and supporters tends to cure one of an overvaluation of human opinion. I can only say, that, since my nerves have been so far strengthened as to enable me to have the free exercise of my mind, I have seldom thought of these unhappy men without praying for their forgiveness. ———, you know, is under a prosecution for a libel against ————. Encouraged by my forbearance, he thought he might treat others with the same impunity as he has done me. Who knows but, in the final issue of things, I may have reason to think these bad men my best friends? *having never before tasted any thing but dangerous prosperity and unmerited praise.*" During the same distressing period she thus writes to her intimate friend the late Rev. Dr. Whalley, of Mendip Lodge, who had been not only her advocate on this occasion, but her warm, steady, and confidential adviser: "I thank God my mind gains ground in point of resignation; and I am more and more convinced that He will bring some good out of this evil. *If only my own heart be humbled and purified, will not that be great good?*" In another letter she says, "One report says that I have been *tried and found guilty of sedition;* another, that I have actually been *taken up.* These things the Bishops write me, with the strongest

expressions of affection to me, and of contempt and abhorrence of the author of these calumnies. The calumnies, however, are of too dreadful a nature to be borne, except from the full conviction that it is the will of God, who is pleased thus to exercise me *for my purification.*" One of her most rancorous opponents ostentatiously advertised that the profits of his pamphlet would be paid to the Bath hospital. In the next publick balance-sheet of that establishment, this item was inserted by the governors. Mrs. More no sooner became aware of the fact than she introduced into her will a bequest to that institution, as a record of her forgiveness to the perpetrators of insult, and a testimony to her own conscience of the sincerity of her Christian spirit.

To the tribulations of genius and piety the world is often indebted for sentiments which most adorn and improve it, as some aromaticks must be crushed to yield their essential fragrance; and it is scarcely possible to doubt that to the state of Mrs. More's mind at this period the Christian world is indebted for a reflection, which, while it challenges insertion here as a faithful transcript of her feelings, is yet more valuable for the pure Christian wisdom, of universal application, which it commends to the reader.

"By a life of activity and usefulness you had, perhaps, attracted the publick esteem. An animal activity had partly stimulated your exertions. The love of reputation begins to mix itself with your better motives. You do not, it is presumed, act

entirely, or chiefly, for human applause; but you are too sensible to it. It is a delicious poison, which begins to infuse itself into your purest cup. You acknowledge, indeed, the sublimity of higher motives, but do you never feel that, separated from this accompaniment of self, they would be too abstracted, too speculative, and might become too little productive both of activity and of sensible gratification? You begin to feel the human incentive necessary, and your spirits would probably flag if it were withdrawn.

"This sensibility to praise would gradually tarnish the purity of your best actions. He who sees your heart as well as your works mercifully snatches you from the perils of prosperity. Malice is awakened. Your most meritorious actions are ascribed to the most corrupt motives. You are attacked just where your character is least vulnerable. The enemies whom your success raised up are raised up by God, less to punish than to save you. We are far from meaning that He can ever be the author of evil; He does not excite or approve the calumny, but He uses your calumniators as instruments of your purification. Your fame was too dear to you. It is a costly sacrifice; but God requires it: it must be offered up. You would gladly compound for any, for every, other offering; but this is the offering He chooses; and while He graciously continues to employ you for His glory, He thus teaches you to renounce your own. He sends this trial as a test by which you are to try yourself. He thus instructs you not to

abandon your Christian exertions, but to elevate the principle which inspired them; to defecate it from all impure admixtures. By thus stripping the most engaging employments of this dangerous delight; by infusing some drops of salutary bitterness into our sweetest draught; by some of these ill-tasted but wholesome mercies, He graciously compels us to return to Himself. By taking away the stays by which we are perpetually propping up our frail delights, they fall to the ground. We are, as it were, driven back to Him, who condescends to receive us, after we have tried every thing else, and after every thing else has failed us, and though He knows we should not have returned to Him if every thing else had not failed us. He makes us feel our weakness that we may have recourse to His strength; He makes us sensible of our hitherto unperceived sins, that we may take refuge in His everlasting compassion."[1]

Silent forgiveness, secret self-humiliation, beneficence to her enemies, jealous scrutiny of her own motives, and the application of her own experience to the instruction of others, were thus Mrs. More's reply to invective and persecution; and her Christian alchymy converted into medicine for herself and the world the deadliest and most malignant venom. She was not, however, destitute of human sympathy and succour. Her numerous friends made every exertion to console and support her; and it would be easy to multiply from private

[1] Practical Piety, chap. viii. Works, vol. viii. p. 139.

letters, testimonies to the generous indignation which the sufferings of Hannah More excited in every virtuous breast. In a letter to Dr. Whalley, written during the early stage of the controversy, Mrs. Piozzi observes,—

> " 'I hate when vice can bolt her arguments,
> And virtue has no tongue to check her pride,'

says Milton. And they want now to stop the warning voice which yet would save us, if men would permit. So valuable a writer, and writings so well timed as hers, will not be found again; and if their vile detractions should injure her feeble health, the mischief done would be past my computation." The apprehensions here expressed were not altogether unfounded. One calumny propagated during this contest, though not less preposterous, yet more atrocious, and more revolting to her delicacy, than the rest, when, by some accident, it came to her knowledge, gave her very serious distress, and cost her a severe and dangerous illness.[1] The reputation of Mrs. More had been continually before the mirror of the world, and not a slur had dimmed the reflection in all the five and fifty years of her honoured life; she had mixed extensively from early youth in the most select circles, whither character was an indispensable passport; and in the most religious, where membership implied it; yet it was not thought too monstrous for malice to

[1] The concise language of Mrs. Martha in a letter to Dr. Whalley is, "My sister H. is again ill,—we are alarmed about her. This affair, I fear, will *destroy* her."

conduct an argumentative controversy by an impeachment of her honour! The spirit which suggested and cherished such an accusation cannot be better illustrated than by the language of "a celebrated poet," as he is termed in an article on Mrs. Hannah More in the twenty-first number of Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, who informed the penman of that exquisite production, that he "would rather have paid 1,000*l.* than have lost so choice a piece of scandal;" saying, that "his happiness was injured," and "his peace of mind disturbed," by the loss of "so precious an anecdote!" "Much bemused in" opium truly must he be, who could record so fiendish a sentiment with unruffled complacency.

Although Mrs. More offered no publick opposition either to courteous or calumnious adversaries, yet when, in 1802, Dr. Beadon succeeded to Bishop Moss in the see of Bath and Wells, she deemed it her duty to explain to the new prelate the transactions at Blagdon, lest he should be induced to disapprove her schools in general; in which case she could not, consistently with her opinions as a churchwoman, have continued to maintain them. The letter which she wrote on that occasion is, perhaps, the most important single document in existence for the illustration of Mrs. More's character and opinions, as well as one of the most eloquent productions of her pen. I am here, by the great kindness of a friend, enabled to present it to the reader entire from the auto-

graph; with the omission only of one short passage, relative to a strictly private transaction, and the substitution of a dash for a name.

"My Lord,

"It is with deep regret that I find myself compelled to trouble your Lordship with this letter, though your known liberality of mind gives me more courage in taking a step which I should, in any case, feel it my duty to take; for, however firm my resolution has been never to answer a line to all the calumnies under which I have been so long suffering, yet to your Lordship, as my Diocesan, I feel myself accountable for my conduct, attacked as it has been with a wantonness of cruelty, which, in these mild times, few persons, especially of my sex, have been called to suffer. To that defenceless sex, and to my declared resolution to return no answers, I attribute this long and unmitigated persecution. I am not going to make your Lordship a party;—I am not going to clear myself by accusing others. Of my assailants I will speak as little as possible. I wish I could avoid naming them altogether. It will be out of my power to enter into a full vindication of myself against charges with which I am not fully acquainted. A wish to keep my mind calm in a dangerous illness of some months induced me to read but very little of what has appeared against me. I can only notice such more material charges as have come to my knowledge. I do not mean to extenuate, much less to deny, any point in which

I may have been to blame. I shall only fairly state a few circumstances which have been violently exaggerated, or grossly misrepresented; the greater part of the charges being wholly groundless.

"I had so fully persuaded myself that I had for many years, especially in the late awful crisis, been devoting my time and humble talents to the promotion of loyalty, good morals, and an attachment to Church and State, among the common people, that I was not prepared for the shock, when a charge of sedition, disaffection, and a general aim to corrupt the principles of the community, suddenly burst upon me. In vain have I been looking round me for any pretence on which to found such astonishing charges. One circumstance which is now made a ground for past accusation is but recently brought forward. The circumstance I allude to is, my being charged with having constantly attended and received the sacrament at Mr. ——'s chapel at Bath for fifteen years. The simple fact is this: The novelty and talents of Mr. ——, a celebrated dissenting minister at Bath, were considered as such an attraction, that I, in common with a number of strict church people, frequently went to hear him preach. It was chiefly at six o'clock in the evening, an hour which did not interfere with the Church Service. It was not unusual to see, perhaps, near half a score clergymen, who, I presume, no more thought they were guilty of disaffection than I myself did. I went, of course, to church as usual, except that

the extreme nearness of this chapel drew me a few mornings, in severe weather, when my health was bad. At one of these times I unexpectedly found they were going to give the sacrament. Taken by surprise, in a moment of irresolution, never having been used to turn my back on the communion at church, I imprudently stayed.[1] How far this single irregularity, which I regretted, and never repeated, deserves the term of constant, your Lordship will judge. My eldest sister has been accused of denying it. She well might deny it, for she never knew it till now. I believe it to have been nine or ten years ago. Again, I did not begin to reside part of the winter at Bath till about the beginning of 1791. I never go thither till near Christmas, and at the time alluded to I always left it, and went to London in February. During a part of this short season I was generally confined by illness. When the interests of the Church became a question (I cannot be quite accurate as to the time, but I think it was either seven or eight years ago) I ceased entirely to go to Mr. ——'s. How far this justifies the charge of fifteen years constant attendance, your Lordship will judge. And is it unfair to request your Lordship to draw your own conclusion concerning the accuracy as well as the candour of my ac-

[1] The subject of Mrs. More's attendance at this meeting will be resumed in the last chapter. It constituted, especially in the exaggerated form mentioned in the letter, a prime article of accusation with those who, in the Blagdon controversy, asserted her alliance with methodism and dissent.

cusers? It was subsequent to this that Mr. Bere thought so well of my principles, as to importune me, even with tears, to establish a school in his parish, lamenting its extreme profligacy and his own inability to do any good to the rising generation. There was company present when he repeatedly made these applications, which I refused, pleading want of health, time, and money. I also declared my unwillingness to undertake it, unless it was the wish of the parish. He then sent his churchwardens as a deputation from the parish; I yielded at last, on hearing that a woman, one of his parishioners, was under sentence of death. I only name this to acquit myself of the charge of *intrusion.*

"As to connection with conventicles of any kind, I never had any. Had I been irregular, should I not have gone sometimes, since my winter residence at Bath, to Lady Huntingdon's chapel, a place of great occasional resort? Should I not have gone to some of Whitfield's or Wesley's Tabernacles in London, where I have spent a long spring for near thirty years? Should I not have strayed now and then into some Methodist meeting in the country? Yet not one of these things have *I ever done.*

"For an answer to the charge of my having ever made any application to get Mr. Bere removed from his curacy, I refer your Lordship to Dr. Moss and Dr. Crossman, in case you are not satisfied with the declaration of both in Dr. Crossman's printed letter to Sir A. Elton.

Mrs. Bere's letter to me, dated January 4th, 1799, complaining of Young's Monday meeting, which I was prevented answering by a long illness, was, in fact, virtually answered *immediately*, by my sister's writing to Young to put a stop directly to the irregularities complained of; which was done. A proof that this ground of complaint had ceased to exist when Mr. Bere made his first attack on me in the beginning of April 1800, appears by a very friendly letter which I have by me from Mr. Bere, dated March 8th, 1800, only about three weeks before Mr. Bere's open attack, and nearly a year and a quarter after the complaint had been made and redressed. Mr. Bere's affidavits, taken by himself, in his own cause, which were flatly contradicted by counter evidence, and which, having no dates to the facts which they attest, could never have been admitted in a court of justice, have all a retrospective reference of one, two, four, and even six years back. Another proof that there was no longer any ground of complaint existing is, that, when Mr. and Mrs. Descury, a respectable family, came to live at Blagdon, near a year after, they were introduced by Mrs. Bere to the school in presence of my sister, with the highest encomiums; their attachment to the school originated from those warm praises, and was afterwards confirmed by their own frequent attendance. I should add, that, having heard in the preceding summer that Mr. Bere had thrown out from the pulpit some insinuations against the school, I went to him with

the greatest civility, and assured him that, as I was shocked at the thought of carrying on an opposition scheme, I was ready to withdraw the school, if it had not his entire approbation. Again he *shed tears* at the bare idea, and implored me not to deprive the parish of such a benefit.

"When Mr. Bere sent me his hostile letter, menacing the schoolmaster, (April 1800,) I was in London; and, being unable, at that distance, to inquire fairly into the complaint, I wrote twice to Mr. Bere, earnestly requesting to refer the whole to Sir A. Elton, as a respectable and judicious magistrate in the neighbourhood; and begged they might investigate the business together. This Mr. Bere twice positively refused. I could have no partial motive in the reference, for I knew so little of Sir A. Elton, that he had never been in my house; whereas he had been long known to Mr. Bere, and I could not have suggested a more fair and peaceable mode of setting all to rights.

"The ground on which human prudence, especially judging *after* the event, may most reasonably condemn me, is, that I did not instantly dismiss Young. I grant that it would have saved me infinite distress. But I not only thought myself bound to protect an innocent man, whom I still conceive to have been falsely accused[1], but I was also convinced that, as the event has proved, the object in view was not merely to ruin *him*, but to

1 Mrs. More does not allude to the charge of irregularity, which was admitted; but to that of having traduced Mr. Bere.

strike at the principle of all my schools, and to stigmatize them as seminaries of fanaticism, vice, and sedition. I was highly displeased with Young when I found that he had allowed two or three of these silly people to attempt extempore prayer. It was from half a dozen to twelve or thirteen poor neighbours, who, it seems, met for one hour in a week for religious conversation. That vulgar people will be vulgar in their religion, and that illiterate people will talk ignorantly, who will deny? But this had nothing to do with my very large Sunday school, where I never heard that any impropriety was complained of. No such complaint had ever reached me from any of my other schools. Young profited so well by my reprimand for this injudicious measure, that his conduct was ever after perfectly correct. Nor should I have overlooked this fault, had not his morals and industry been exemplary, and had I ever, in the course of ten years, found him at all fanatical. Allow me to add that he now gives the highest satisfaction to the opulent and highly respectable family of the Latouches, near Dublin, who received him to superintend their large charitable institution, after having read all the charges against him, and whose attestation to his good conduct, together with that of Lady Harriet Daly and Baron Daly, I shall trouble your Lordship to peruse. To remove prejudices, however, I resolved to place him elsewhere, had I continued the Blagdon School, which, together with its master, had been restored (after I had dissolved it) at the

earnest request of Dr. Crossman, and with the consent of Dr. Moss. But after Mr. Bere's restoration to the curacy, no entreaties of Dr. Crossman could induce me to continue it. I took a journey to Dr. C.'s house in the West on purpose to assure him that I did not withdraw my school from resentment, but that I should consider the continuance of it as an act of opposition to Mr. Bere; whereas, by putting an end to the school, I thought I should disarm him of every plea for farther hostility. This sacrifice for the sake of peace proved ineffectual. I abolished my school with regret (full and flourishing as it was) for the second time on a Sunday in September 1801, and on the Wednesday following the most hostile of all his pamphlets against me was advertised. May I be permitted to add, that Dr. Maclaine, who spent great part of the two last summers at Blagdon, knew much of the school and its master. Permit me to refer your Lordship to him. In the learned and venerable translator of Mosheim, you will not expect to find an advocate for fanaticism. It has been repeatedly said that, being a Calvinist myself, I always employed Calvinistick teachers. I never knowingly employed one. As to Calvinism or Arminianism, I should be very sorry if such terms were known in my schools, it never having been my object to teach dogmas and opinions, but to train up good members of society, and plain practical Christians. I have discharged two teachers for discovering a tendency to enthusiasm, and one for being accused of it, without discovering such

tendency. One experiment was made; for I shall be perfectly ingenuous. An inferior teacher being wanted under an excellent mistress, the clergyman ventured to employ a poor man of the parish, from having observed his constant attendance at church and his good moral conduct, though he went to the Methodist meeting. He earnestly hoped that, from the man's soberness of mind, and regularity at church, he might become entirely detached from the Methodist Society, and be the instrument of detaching others also; but, not finding this to be the case, the minister who had engaged him was convinced of the expediency of his removal, and dismissed him with my full concurrence. The Methodists are, in general, hostile to my schools, for attracting, as they say, the people from them to the Church; and I have been assured that some of their preachers have inveighed against me by name in their sermons. As to myself, I had hoped that the numerous occasions which occur in eight printed volumes, of expressing my sentiments, both religious and political, might have precluded the necessity of a formal confession of faith. I refer your Lordship to those volumes to produce a single Calvinistick passage. The last Chapter, page 8, contains my full and undisguised view of the leading doctrines of Christianity.—See from page 272 to 320.[1] Those doctrines, I conceive, (for I am but a poor divine) are equally embraced by

[1] Chap. xx. of Strictures on Female Education.—Works, vol. v. p. 387. Edit. 1830.

pious Arminians and Calvinists. Lest this should be thought evasive, I have no hesitation in declaring that I do not entertain one tenet peculiar to Calvinism. Let me not, however, in stating my own opinions, lose sight of that candour towards good men who think differently from me which I have always so sedulously cultivated. I admire many, especially of the old writers, of that class, such as Hooker, Bishops Hall, Hopkins, and others; but I admire them, not for their Calvinism, but for their devout spirit, their deep views of Christianity, their practical piety, and their vigilance, while they inculcate faith as the principle, never to lose sight of good works.

"I had hoped that my zealous attachment to the *Church* must have been inferred from a multitude of incidental passages in my writings, particularly in the 6th volume[1]: more conclusive, perhaps, from being incidental and frequent than a specifick and elaborate declaration would have been. For it is not so much from an insulated passage, as from the general tenor and spirit of his writings, that an author's principles may be deduced. Having observed, from the beginning of the French Revolution, the arts used by the Jacobinical writers to alienate the people from the Church by undermining their respect for its mi-

[1] Containing "Thoughts on the Manners of the Great," "An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World," and "Remarks on the Speech of M. Dupont, made in the National Convention of France in 1793."—Edition 1801.

nisters, I made it a leading principle of a multitude of little tracts, which I wrote purposely to counteract their pestilent pamphlets, to introduce into almost every one of them an exemplary parish minister, who, without cant or enthusiasm, is always exhibited in a pious and amiable point of view. As works of imagination had been employed to induce a contempt for the clerical character, I thought these fictitious characters the most popular vehicle in which to convey an antidote for the reigning disease, and that, by assiduously infusing this spirit into the very amusements of the lower classes, I should thus lead them insensibly to an habit of loving and reverencing the clergy.

"Nor was I less amazed to find my *political* principles stigmatized by my accusers. Besides their *general* tendency, some of my tracts go directly to the defence of the constitution. Whether they were of any use in the moment of danger, it becomes not me to say. My enemies being judges, I should hope they were, as I can produce several letters of undeservedly high praises from those who are now loudest in the cry against me.

"It has been broadly intimated that I have laboured to spread French principles, and one of my schools is specifically charged with having *prayed for the success of the French*.[1] Am I seriously to defend

[1] Young was accused of having prayed for "the French, *now suffering persecution for righteousness' sake.*" An accusation so strangely worded would seem to be grounded upon something. It is not unlikely that, on the occasion of his extemporaneous effusion, he prayed for *the French loyalists* in those terms. But the distor-

myself against such charges? I plead guilty to having written an answer to Dupont, the atheistical orator of France (see vol. 6.)[1], and of having devoted the profits of this slight work, together with those of "Village Politicks," amounting to considerably above 200*l.*, to the relief of the French emigrant clergy. To perversions of this sort I am almost daily accustomed.

"When I first established my school, poor women used to send crying infants of two or three years old, to the great disturbance of the rest, while they kept at home children of a fitter age to learn. This led us to make it one of the rules, not to receive any under six years old. I told the mothers, 'ours was a school, not a nursery.' On this simple circumstance has been built the astonishing charge that I did not want to instruct children, but to pervert grown people. There is no end to instances of this sort; but a few may serve as a specimen. Not only conversations are printed which never took place, between me and persons whom I do not know, but about persons whose names I never heard. I am accused of being the abettor, not only of fanaticism and sedition, but of 'thieving and prostitution.' To all these accusations or inuendos, I have never answered one word, though some of my best friends advised me

tion of this language into a prayer for the success of the godless savages of the revolution is an amusing and curious experiment in moral chemistry:—the amalgam of ignorance, malice, and credulity.

[1] Vol. xi. of edit. 1830.

to answer by a prosecution. This I declined, though I confess that the charge of murder could scarcely have shocked me more than that of disaffection or sedition.

"Allow me to quote one passage from another letter of Mrs. Bere, which I happen to have by me:—'The school goes on well. There seems to be a serious spirit working for good among the common people. Mr. Bere desires me to say, and he thinks it is saying a great deal, that two sessions and two assizes are past, and a third of each nearly approaching, and neither as prosecutor or prisoner, plaintiff or defendant, has any one of this parish, once so notorious for crimes and litigation, appeared. And, moreover, warrants for wood-stealing, pilfering, &c. are quite out of fashion.'—Your Lordship will have the goodness to compare this passage with the antecedent accusations, both copied *verbatim*.

"I am assured by those who have carefully read the different pamphlets against me, that, while I am accused in one of seditious practices, I am reviled in another as an enemy to liberty;—in one, of being disaffected to Church and State, in another of being a ministerial hireling and a tool of Government. Nay, the very tracts are specified for which the 'venal hireling was paid by administration.' (By Mr. Pitt, I think.) In one I am charged with praying for the success of the French, in another, of fomenting, by my writings, the war with France, and savagely triumphing at every victory over what the author calls 'those friends to

the general amelioration of human society.' I am accused of delighting in a war 'which we madly carried on, which began in iniquity and ended in disgrace.'—In one place, of not believing one word of Christianity; in another, of being hostile to the Church; in a third, of idolizing the Athanasian creed, which 'complicated piece of metaphysicks' the author declares the Church might spare, and which he advises me, when expunged from the Liturgy, to order myself to be wrapped in as a winding sheet.

"But to return to my schools. When I settled in this country thirteen years ago, I found the poor in many of the villages sunk in a deplorable state of ignorance and vice. There were, I think, no Sunday schools in the whole district, except one in my own parish, which had been established by our respectable rector[1], and another in the adjoining parish of Churchill. This drew me to the more neglected villages, which, being distant, made it very laborious. Not one school have I ever attempted to establish without the hearty concurrence of the clergyman. My plan of instruction is extremely simple and limited. They learn on week days such coarse works as may fit them for servants. I allow of no writing for the poor. My object is not to make fanaticks, but to train up the lower classes in habits of industry and piety. I know no way of teaching morals but by teaching principles; nor of inculcating Christian

[1] The Rev. Wm. Leeves, rector of Wrington for fifty years.

principles without a good knowledge of Scripture. I own I have laboured this point diligently. My sisters and I always teach them ourselves every Sunday, except during our absence in the winter. By being out about thirteen hours, we have generally contrived to visit two schools the same day, and carry them to their respective churches. When we had more schools, we commonly visited three on a Sunday. The only books we use in teaching are two little tracts, called 'Questions for the Mendip Schools' (to be had of Hatchard)—The Church Catechism (these are framed, and half a dozen hung up in the room)—The Catechism broken into short Questions—spelling books—Psalter — Common Prayer —Testament — Bible. The little ones repeat Watts's Hymns. The collect is learned every Sunday. They generally learn the Sermon on the Mount, with many other chapters and psalms. Finding that what the children learned at school they commonly lost at home, by the profaneness and ignorance of their parents, it occurred to me, in some of the larger parishes, to invite the latter to come at six in the Sunday evening for an hour to the school, together with the elder scholars. A plain printed sermon and a printed prayer is read to them, and a psalm sung. I am not bribed by my taste, for, unluckily, I do not like musick; but having heard that singing is one great attraction among the Methodists, I thought it but fair to counteract them with their own weapons, and, with this view, allowed of their singing psalms. When we are present, we our-

selves always read the sermon and prayer; in our absence, the clergyman commonly chooses them for the mistress, and he or his wife is generally present, whether we are there or not. I was scarcely ever at Blagdon school without *Mrs.* Bere, at least. I dissolved one very large and flourishing school, because, after the death of the rector, who had assisted me in establishing it, and the removal of his curate, no subsequent curate had thought proper to attend. At Banwell, when I withdrew my school, Mr. Blomberg, the present vicar, employed the same teachers to superintend his. At Congresbury, the woman who had taught in my school now conducts that of the vicar, Dr. Small; for I had established there two small schools, and another, because the numbers did not make amends for the trouble and expense, and I was about to establish in their stead a large one in the populous parish of Chew-Magna, where the rector had long been looking out for a house for me, when the sudden and violent attacks on me discouraged or rather disabled me for any additional exertion. My schools, except in a very few instances, have always been, and now are, conducted by a mistress. I prefer women, and find it does better.

"For many years I have given away annually near two hundred Bibles, Common Prayer books, and Testaments. To teach the poor to read, without providing them with *safe* books has always appeared to me an improper measure, and this induced me to the laborious undertaking of the Cheap Repository tracts. In some parishes, where

the poor are numerous, such as Cheddar, and the distressed mining villages of Shipham and Rowberrow, I have instituted, with considerable expense to myself, friendly benefit societies for poor women, which have proved a great relief to the sick and lying-in; especially in the late seasons of scarcity. We have, in one parish *only*, a fund of between two and three hundred pounds (the others in proportion). This I have placed out in the stocks. The late lady of the manor at Cheddar, in addition to her kindness to my institutions there during her life, left at her death a legacy for the club, and another for the school, as a testimony of her opinion of the utility of both. We have two little annual festivities for the children and poor women of these clubs, which are always attended by a large concourse of gentry and clergy. As the morals of those of my own sex have been the constant object of my peculiar regard, it is a standing rule at these anniversaries, that every young woman bred in the schools and belonging to the club, who has been married in the preceding year, and can produce a testimonial of her good conduct from the minister and the schoolmistress, receives a little publick reward, consisting of a crown piece, a pair of white stockings of my own knitting, and a Bible. This trifling encouragement has had its effect, and sobriety and virtue are now considered as necessary to the establishment of a young woman. Forgive these petty details. At one of these publick meetings Mr. Bere declared that, since the institution

of the schools, he could now dine in peace; for that, where he used to issue ten warrants, he was not now called on for two. I shall take the liberty of sending your Lordship the rules of my schools, which have never been altered; and of referring you to the testimonials (printed in the publick papers) of the churchwardens and principal inhabitants of some of those parishes where my conduct had been most attacked. To ascertain whether I have been used to act in concert with the parish minister, and whether my schools have been of some little use in improving morals, or attracting the people to church, may I presume to refer your Lordship to a small pamphlet, called 'A Statement of Facts,' by nine clergymen who are or have been connected with my schools?[1] May I also venture to refer you to those gentlemen personally? and may I take leave to observe, that they cannot, as has been suggested, be persons of a particular description, picked out to serve a particular purpose, being the real officiating ministers of the several parishes? Two others are dead; to the widow of one of the deceased, who always spent a great part of the Sunday in my school

[1] These were the Reverends Lewis Hart and John Sparrow, successively curates of Nailsea; S. T. Wylde, vicar of Burrington (before curate of Yatton); Henry Hawes, vicar of Yatton; Henry Bevan, curate of Congresbury; James Jones, rector of Shipham; John Boak, rector of Brockley (before curate of Cheddar, Axbridge, &c.); Thomas Drewitt, curate of Cheddar; and J. Rawbone, vicar of Cheddar. The testimonies of some of these have been already cited.

(Mrs. Chapman), and to all who are living, I can refer, except to the curate of ——, * * * * My schools were always honoured with the full sanction of the late bishop, of which I have even recent testimonies. For ten years they met with general approbation. It does not appear that any one person who has written against them (except Mr. Bere) ever saw them. I am not accustomed to refer to others for my character; I am not accustomed to vindicate it myself; but it is natural to wish that it should not be taken from avowed enemies or total strangers. Most of my immediate neighbours, Mr. Leeves, the rector of my parish, Dr. Randolph, to whose congregation I belong at Bath, are likely to know more of my principles and conduct. My habits in the world are well known. My friendships and connexions have not been among the suspected part of mankind. My attachment to the Established Church is, and ever has been, entire, cordial, invariable, and, till now, unquestioned; its doctrine and discipline I equally approve. I have long had the honour of reckoning many of its most distinguished dignitaries among my friends.

"I am too deeply sensible of the infirmity and evil of my own mind not to allow readily that much error and imperfection may have been mixed with my attempts to do a little good; but it would be false humility not to say that the whole drift and tendency has been right to the very best of my power. Mine is so far a singular case, that I not only feel myself guiltless of the motives and

actions imputed to me, but I am conscious that all my little strength has been employed in the very contrary direction. Your Lordship's enlightened mind will give me credit for studiously keeping back what would, with ordinary judges, have best served my cause; I mean a resentful retaliation on the conduct and motives of my adversaries: and my forbearance in avoiding attack or accusation.

"I would appeal to any candid judge, whether, in an undertaking so difficult and extensive,—being far from all the schools, five, ten, and from one even fifteen miles,—it would be wonderful if I should have been sometimes (it has not happened often) mistaken in the instruments I employed? and if the most vigilant prudence could do more than discharge such as proved improper? In a few instances, where none could be found properly qualified on the spot, I have employed strangers; but, in general, the teachers have been taken from the parish on the recommendation of the minister, or the principal inhabitants, or both. All the under teachers at Blagdon were recommended by Mr. Bere. The obnoxious Wedmore schoolmaster had notice to quit as soon after I came from London as the complaint was made, and was actually removed as soon as his wife recovered from her lying-in. I thought nothing could be more promising than this man. I found him carrying on a little trade in Bristol, after having failed in a larger; an active member of the volunteer corps, and tax-gatherer of the parish.

"I need not inform your Lordship why the illiterate, when they become religious, are more liable to enthusiasm than the better-informed. They have also a coarse way of expressing their religious sentiments, which often appears to be enthusiasm, when it is only vulgarity or quaintness. But I am persuaded your Lordship will allow, that this does not furnish a reason why the poor should be left destitute of religious instruction. That the knowledge of the Bible should lay men more open to the delusions of fanaticism on the one hand, or of Jacobinism on the other, appears so unlikely, that I should have thought the strongest probability lay on the other side. I do not vindicate enthusiasm; I dread it. But if even the possibility that a *few might* become enthusiasts should be proved, could that be justly pleaded as an argument for giving them all up [to] actual vice and barbarism? The late Henry Fielding assured a friend of mine, that, during his late administration of justice in Bow-street, only *six* Scotchmen had been brought before him. He accounted for it entirely from the peculiar attention which the Scotch pay to the early education of the lower classes. In the late revolution in France and rebellion in Ireland, did not the sworn enemies to government and good order find the mass of the people in both countries proper tools for their iniquitous designs in proportion to their gross ignorance and unformed morals?

"In one of the principal pamphlets against me, it is asserted that my writings ought to be burned

by the hands of the common hangman. In most of them it is affirmed that my principles and actions are corrupt and mischievous in no common degree. If the grosser crimes alleged against me be true, I am not only unfit to be allowed to teach poor children to read, but unfit to be tolerated in any class of society; if, on the contrary, the heavier charges should prove not to be true, may it not furnish a presumption that the lesser are equally unfounded?

"There is scarcely any motive so pernicious, nor any hypocrisy so deep, to which my plans have not been attributed; yet I have neither improved my interest nor my fortune by them. I am not of a sex to expect preferment, nor of a temper to court favour; nor was I so ignorant of mankind to look for applause by means so little calculated to attain it, though perhaps I did not reckon on such a degree of obloquy. If vanity were my motive, it has been properly punished; if hypocrisy, I am hastening fast to answer for it at a tribunal compared with which all human opinion weighs very light indeed; in view of this awful responsibility, the sacrifice which I have been called to make of health, peace, and reputation, shrinks into nothing.

"And now, my Lord, I come to what has been the ultimate object of this too tedious letter,—a request to know what is your Lordship's pleasure. I have too high an opinion of your wisdom and candour to suspect the equity of your determination. I know too well what I owe to the station

you fill, to dispute your authority, or oppose your commands. If it should be your will that my remaining schools should be abolished, I may lament your decision, but I will obey it. My deep reverence for the laws and institutions of my country inspires me with a proportionable veneration for all instituted authorities, whether in Church or State. If I am not permitted to employ the short remnant of a life which has been nearly destroyed by these reiterated attacks, in being, in my small measure and degree, actively useful, I will at least set my accusers an example of profound obedience to those superiors whom the providence of God has set over me, and whom, next to Him, I am bound to obey.

"It will be a strong proof of your Lordship's goodness if you will pardon the egotism and the tediousness of this letter; but I thought it my duty to be full and explicit.

"I have the honour to be,
With the highest respect, my Lord,
Your Lordship's most obedient and most
faithful humble servant,
HANNAH MORE."

"*Barley Wood,*
August 24th, 1802."

To this affecting and dignified appeal the bishop gave a prompt and most satisfactory reply. He treated the impeachment of Mrs. More's religion, morals, and loyalty with the contempt it deserved, and promised her every protection and encouragement for her Sunday schools.

The temporal condition of Mrs. More was not without "the promise of the world that now is." [1] Her illness elicited proofs, which nothing but tribulation could have afforded her, of the affection and reverence with which she was regarded by all the virtuous and holy of all ranks, from the court to the cottage. Her malady was considered by such as a personal distress to each, and a publick calamity to all. This, independently of higher resources, was abundant consolation. Her slanderers, perceiving that no tacticks could prevail with her to expose herself to their envenomed bolts, by exchanging for a moment the shield of silence for the weapons of controversy, ceased from their unhallowed labours.

> "——— They, astonished, all resistance lost,
> All courage; down their idle weapons dropt;" [2]

and the object of their furious but impotent malice, strong in the consciousness of sincerity, and in the esteem and affection of all that was good and holy, passed on to glorify her God, and to benefit her kind.[3]

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[1] 1 Tim. iv. 8. [2] Par. Lost, vi. 477.

[3] It is a curious fact that four of her most violent traducers were afterwards found guilty of libels against other persons in the court of King's Bench.

PORTEUS'S URN, BARLEY WOOD.

"Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth."—*Ps.* ii. 10.

"A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband."—*Prov.* xii. 4.

"My son, fear thou the Lord and the king, and meddle not with them who are given to change."—*Ibid.* xxiv. 21.

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."—1 *Cor.* xi. 1.

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."—*Job* i. 21.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE distressful incidents detailed in the last chapter would leave the reader to expect that,

during the prevalence of these unhappy dissensions, Mrs. More would have found ample employment in fortifying her spirits against the trials she was called to endure, and endeavouring, as far as possible, to bear up against the accumulation of obloquy and indignity under which her bodily powers were sinking, and her mind was agitated and distressed. But the conclusion would do injustice to the victorious power of faith, and the sustaining vigour of conscious innocence and sincerity. When her malady would not permit her to quit her apartment, she employed herself in preparing for the press an entire edition of her works. When able, she still undertook the management of her schools; and she was also busied in building a house, and laying out the adjacent grounds. The wish of Socrates, to fill even a small house with real friends, had been, by a good Providence, realized to Hannah More; and Cowslip Green could no longer accommodate the throngs of the learned, the pious, and the distinguished, who constantly resorted to its classick precincts. Mrs. More, therefore, purchased a few acres of land about half a mile from the village of Wrington, on which to erect a more commodious dwelling. In every respect Barley Wood was admirably chosen for the purpose. The luxuriant valley, of which Cowslip Green commands only the portion immediately around, here sweeps away beneath the eye with all its infinite variety of hues, glowing with verdure and foliage, sprinkled with hamlets, towers, and cottages, and pointing

the view to the exquisite proportions of the principal village church; flanked by the broad and bold line of the Mendips, gradually making way for the softer tints of the peaks and knolls which spread down to the Channel, and bounded by the faint outline of the Welsh mountains. It is called by the late accomplished Alexander Knox, "one of the finest spots in the British empire."[1] To these natural advantages, the hand of Hannah More was not slow to add the creations of a pure and well cultivated taste. In the tranquillizing occupations of floriculture and landscape-gardening, she found her frame recruited and her spirits quieted. Sylvan walks and recesses, lawns and flower-beds, sprang rapidly into beauty; and, in 1801, Barley Wood became the residence of Hannah More, and the resort of admiring friends.

In the same year, Mrs. More published her entire works in eight octavo volumes. It was on this occasion that, on republishing her tragedies,

[1] The whole passage,—it might almost be said, the whole letter,—is too illustrative of the subject of this volume, not to deserve transcription. "Hannah More is wonderfully well, enjoying, to a very competent degree, one of the finest spots in the British empire. It is, I may say, but a field; yet such is the variety of ground within, and such the extensiveness of prospect without, and, moreover, such the exquisite adaptation of the house, and the form and disposition of its rooms, to the site, and such the care to embellish the grounds, that every day almost, more and more, I think this just a gift of all-gracious Providence to Hannah More, to sooth her after all her troubles. * * * She now views them just as she should, and feels in her heart that she needed them, and that they have, in some degree, answered their end, in separating her still more from worldly objects and feelings."—*Letter to G. Schoales, Esq.—Remains of Alex. Knox, Esq.*, vol. iv. p. 172.

BARLEY WOOD.

she took the opportunity to make a formal and elaborate declaration of the revolution which her sentiments had undergone in regard to the stage. To this amusement, as has been shewn, she had entertained from early life a partiality so decided, that the renunciation of all connection with it was a pure sacrifice to what she conceived to be duty. Her views on the subject, she here informs us, were not received from any thing she had read or heard, but had arisen solely from her experience and observation. They are, undoubtedly, very original; and it would be great injustice to Hannah More to class her with those who condemn the drama, together with all other amusements, as a vanity renounced in the baptismal vow. They may be truly conscientious; but Hannah More was not one of them. She made distinctions of which they would not allow. She objected not to the drama as an amusement, but as commonly inculcating principles based on a false foundation; while she drew the broadest distinction between *seeing* and *reading* the *same* play, in which these principles were found.

It is impossible not to respect the decision with which she sacrificed a pleasure in which she delighted, the moment she entertained a doubt of its congruity with the gospel; the frankness with which she avowed so total a revolution in her views; and the candour with which she adduced her own compositions, as instances of the evils which she deprecated in dramatick exhibitions. It is, however, impossible not to regret that,

instead of condemning the stage as irreclaimable, she did not apply the high advantages which she possessed for such an object, to the purification and improvement of the national drama, the character of which it is very possible her "Preface to the Tragedies," though most unintentionally, has concurred with other causes to deteriorate. The stage has hitherto rather reflected than formed the morals and manners of society.

> "The drama's laws the drama's patrons give,
> And those who live to please must please to live."[1]

Hence, if dramatick literature, for the most part, exhibited a false standard of morality, the cause is traceable to those popular corruptions to which we have already adverted. In contributing to the correction of these, Mrs. More had already made a step toward a reformation of the theatre; and, with her dramatick predilections, theatrical success, and histrionick acquaintances, none could possess higher advantages, had she thought herself justified in employing them, for effecting a complete dramatick reformation. The depth, distinctness, and durability of impression produced by theatrical exhibitions, and which, in Mrs. More's view, is a serious objection to them, would, where virtue is the animating principle of a play, become a direct argument in their favour. For, though the stage is not expected to be, nor ought to be, a school of *religion*, there is nothing in its nature which prevents it from becoming a school of

[1] Johnson's prologue at the opening of Drury Lane theatre.

Christian morality. "Honour," says Mrs. More, "is the religion of tragedy;" but even if this be so in practice, (which is, perhaps, conceding too much,) it is not so necessarily or essentially; neither is it the principle of honour, in reality, but that of *false* honour, which is opposed to true virtue. It was a pious Christian and true moralist, as well as an eminent dramatick poet, who said,

> "Honour's a sacred tie, the law of kings,
> The noble mind's distinguishing perfection,
> That aids and strengthens Virtue, where it meets her,
> And, where she is not, imitates her actions." [1]

Had Hannah More addressed to the patrons of the drama those eloquent and straightforward appeals which she had so successfully urged to "the Makers of Manners," and the guardians of youth, every night might be now working, in the minds of hundreds, effects no less salutary than those which have been *known* to be produced by "The Gamester" and "George Barnwell." Nor is it only the non-improvement of the stage which we have to deplore. The character of Hannah More gave her opinions authority and influence, even where her arguments might not otherwise have been admitted; and this was particularly the case in the present instance, when the expression of her opinion was accompanied with a self-denial which at once avouched its sincerity, and claimed respect for her who entertained it. It is impossible to doubt that the "Preface to the Tragedies"

[1] Addison's Cato.

was influential in withdrawing from the British stage the support of many whose countenance was most important to its moral and literary purity; and may be, perhaps, the best solution of the paradox, that an age undoubtedly superior to its predecessor in religious seriousness, social morals, and genuine delicacy, should be degraded beyond any period of our history (with the exception, perhaps, of that of the Restoration) in the moral and literary character of its theatre.

Still the conduct of Mrs. More claims respect; especially as she made by it a sacrifice, to her far more costly than any now mentioned,—one means of doing good: which she preferred neglecting, because she held the good impracticable without an instrumentality of evil. It appears from the "Preface to the Tragedies," that she had actually contemplated such an attempt, but had abandoned it afterwards in consequence of her holding the British stage incorrigible. It is observable, however, that, *after* this time, Mrs. More, who, in Britain, not only refused to employ the stage as one of her instruments of publick reformation, but held it to be a tool incapable of repair, or at best, rather calculated to mar than to expedite the work, actually projected a reformation in *Ceylon* through the medium of theatrical entertainments, of which the people are passionately fond. She had sketched the plan of several dramas for this purpose, but they were never completed.

From her correspondence with Messrs. Cadell and Davies, about this time, it seems that those

gentlemen wished her to undertake an edition of the writings of Garrick, with a prefatory memoir; and that it was her intention to consult Mrs. Garrick on the subject. It does not appear, however, that the matter went further; a circumstance greatly to be regretted, as none could have had more favourable opportunities of studying the character and genius of this wonderful man, of exploring the history of his success, and of investigating the influence of his powers; while none was so competent to develope the moral of a life which had been so deeply influential on her own.

The beauty and convenience of Mrs. More's new residence attracted her sisters from Bath; and they now parted with their house in Pulteney Street, and resided entirely at Barley Wood, where they conducted in concert their plans of local amelioration; combining, in a degree perhaps unexampled, the contemplative elevation of the most recluse life with the bustle and usefulness of the busiest. The religion of Hannah More had ever been far from that of the mere mystick; though none enjoyed more deeply the delights of closet devotion and sacred study, they were never regarded by her as more than preparatives for action, or refreshments after it—the privileges rather than the labours of religion; privileges which could have no real existence for the indolent and selfish. Ever on the watch for opportunities of good, and patriotick as devotional, she saw in the position of her country a new call to animated exertion. The exclusive assumption of a quality

is generally no more than a cloak to conceal its deficiency; it is the coward that talks the loudest of his courage, and the knave that parades his honesty. Of this the revolutionists of France afforded a prominent instance. Assuming to be the only patrons of civil and religious liberty, the Jacobins had overturned all law, and proscribed all religion. Reason then became their goddess; and all the world was to be subdued to "fraternization" by the arms of the new tutelary divinity. When, however, it appeared that the number of those who were disposed to yield up their religious hopes, their civil security, and their domestick endearments to the logicians of "the Mountain" was very inconsiderable, the votaries of Reason brought the "ultima ratio" of their royal predecessors[1] to bear upon their cause; and England was threatened with French principles, no longer in French pamphlets, but at the muzzle of French artillery. Persuasions, however, were not neglected; the foolish and mischievous sophism that "the poor have nothing to lose" was sedulously rung in the ears of those who were intended to be the dupes of it; and no means were left unemployed to seduce the people of Britain from those religious and political attachments which were the pledge and essence of their safety and happiness. Mrs. More had now had proof enough of the efficiency of spirited songs and ballads, in

[1] The ordnance used by Lewis XIV. bore the motto, "Ultima ratio regum."

the results both of the enemy's and her own; and she again resumed the lyre of Tyrtæus with great spirit and effect, in her patriotick songs of "A King or a Consul?" and "The Ploughman's Ditty." About the same time she was solicited by the committee of Lloyd's to compose the address for the Patriotick Fund, which she did. Nor was her patriotism confined to stimulating others to duty. With that generous self-denial which true Christianity inspires, she offered her newly-built and embellished residence, with all the fruits of the labour and wealth which had been expended upon it, to the commanding officer at Bristol, to be converted into a military post in the event of invasion, or to be partially used in the mean time.

A merciful Providence had not only bestowed on our favoured country a general spirit of ardent attachment to its institutions, and of complete self-devotion to their preservation, but the champions of religion and true liberty found a leader and a protector just where they might have reasonably sought one; He in whose hand the King's heart is as the rivers of water [1] having graciously inclined the heart of GEORGE III. to be no less distinguished above his subjects for patriotick energy than for the exalted office which he bore. Placing at the head of the state "the pilot that weathered the storm," he repressed with calm decision and paternal mildness the outbursts of

[1] Prov. xxi. 1

mutinous faction and internal discontent, while he frowned a stern and unqualified defiance on the infidel invader. He knew but of one rule of political or of private conduct—his BIBLE; that Bible which he desired to see read by every poor child in his dominions; a result which Mrs. More had done her part so amply to accomplish. An enlightened attachment to the Church of England was the natural result. A churchman from conviction, he was ready, in his own kingly words, to lay his head on the block, if the alternative were the violation of the oath which he had sworn to protect the religion of his kingdom. "Firmly attached to the Church of which God had made him the supreme head, strong in that faith of which God had appointed him the hereditary defender, he yet suffered no act of religious persecution to dishonour his reign. His firmness was without intolerance, his moderation without laxity."[1] How far the government of such a sovereign contributed, under a beneficent Providence, to the salvation of his country in that gloomiest hour of her peril was too evident to every patriot understanding not to make it a matter of anxious solicitude that the same great blessing should be secured to latest generations. In the right guidance of the infant mind of the Princess Charlotte of Wales appeared then to center the hopes of the nation for a very distant period; and certainly the King's dominions did not contain one mind more

[1] Mrs. More's preface to the sixth edition of "Moral Sketches."

capable of advising her soberly, rightly, and liberally than that of Hannah More.

The idea of a work which should comprise the outline of a complete education for an heiress presumptive to the British throne was suggested to Mrs. More by the Rev. Dr. Gray, then prebendary of Durham, and afterwards Bishop of Bristol, who earnestly urged her to undertake it. Several persons of rank afterwards seconded the call. Not without some misgivings, she complied; and the Doctor throughout assisted her with his advice and information on the subject. Mr. Alexander Knox, who was visiting Barley Wood at the time, added also many valuable observations and suggestions. The second volume of the work had gone to press, when Dr. Fisher, then Bishop of Exeter, was appointed preceptor to the Princess. Mrs. More, fearing that her book might now present the appearance of dictation to a learned and judicious prelate, had almost designed to suppress it; but, on a second consideration, she preferred to dedicate it to the Bishop, explaining the circumstances under which it appeared.

In the spring of 1805 this treatise came forth, like her others of kindred argument, anonymously, and with no better success in preserving the disguise. Mrs. More had not been without some solicitude lest the plainness and decision of her statements might give offence even in the quarter they were intended to serve; but her views of duty were high, and, having once undertaken the work, she would not qualify any statement which

her plan required. But she soon had all her apprehensions completely set at rest. Through the Bishop of Exeter, she had transmitted copies to the King and Queen, and to the Prince and Princess of Wales; and the Queen, in particular, warmly expressed her approbation of it. The Duchess of Gloucester gave a grand publick breakfast, at which she introduced to her royal and distinguished guests the authoress of "Hints to a Princess." The Duchess always manifested the greatest friendship for Mrs. More, and even worked for her an embroidered dress. The Queen and Lady Elgin sought the advice of Mrs. More in the education of the young Princess, and invited her to a conference at Weymouth; which honour the state of her health compelled her to decline. It may be interesting to add, that the last book which the young Princess herself read before her marriage, and the last which she read before her death, was the "Hints;" and if this work was not permitted to prepare her for a temporal crown, its lessons were yet more directed to the qualification for that "crown of life" which we trust is hers; and for the kingdom of heaven she may now, under grace, be indebted to the precepts of Hannah More. From this time Mrs. More was honoured with the intimacy of some members of the royal family, having long enjoyed the esteem of all. And it may not be undeserving of record that, when arrangements were in progress to remove the mail between Bristol and Exeter from the road near Wrington, Sir Francis Freeling was especially charged from

St. James's to ascertain if the alteration would be inconvenient to Mrs. More, in which case it was not to be made. Mrs. More, however, gratefully replied that she never would be party to any arrangement for accommodating herself to the injury of the publick.

The "Hints for the Education of a young Princess" are, perhaps, less known at present than any other work of Mrs. More, although they have passed through six editions of 1,000 copies each, and were, at the time of their publication, eminently popular. The venerable and learned Elizabeth Carter was in company with Mrs. More when the authorship of the work was made known to her, and, laying her hand on Mrs. More's arm, she said, "I am glad I have lived to read it." The title, to many, conveys an idea so exclusive that it is too often supposed that the book can contain no interest or advantage for any but princes. This is, however, a great error; the rules and maxims which it lays down are of perpetual value and import; it is, indeed, an abstract and digest of those religious and political principles to which Britain is, in human parlance, indebted for her position among the nations; it is a manual of the philosophy of government; while, for the most part, as an essay on tuition, there is little in it which does not as strictly apply to all liberal education as much as to that of princes, and much which is valuable for all classes of society. The Bishop of Exeter, the princess's tutor, acknowledged that he gained from it more information on the subject of his duties in that capacity than ever he received in

all his reading[1]; Sir Alexander Johnston, of whose acquaintance with Mrs. More further particulars will be given presently, sent the "Hints" to the Rajah of Tanjore, to be translated into the Mahratta language, for the use of his favourite daughter; and it is curious to see the view taken of the subject by an intelligent American, whose prejudices, certainly, had no share in exciting his admiration of this work. A letter to Mrs. More from Richard Rush, Esq., ambassador from the United States in 1818, thus expresses his opinion of the "Hints:"—"I think I see in it full as much of what is elevated, and more of what is practically useful, than in 'Telemachus.' I intend that my son shall read 'Telemachus' every year, from the time he is sixteen till he is twenty; and I am now truly pleased that he will have such a companion for your kind present."[2] It certainly deserves to rank high among Mrs. More's productions, if it be not, indeed, the most valuable and useful of them all.

Very shortly after the publication of the "Hints" Mrs. More's philanthropick labours were suspended by one of the most severe and distressing maladies with which her delicate frame had ever been visited. For nearly two years she passed her time

[1] Bishop Jebb's Letters, edited by Forster. Letter xxviii.

[2] The occasion which called forth Mr. Rush's letter is interesting. His father, Dr. Rush, feeling his health decline, wrote to Mrs. More, saying he could not quit the world, without thanking her for what she had written. Mrs. More immediately replied, but her letter did not reach America till after the doctor's death. The letter quoted in the text was a reply to Mrs. More's.

exclusively in her bedchamber. It was during her convalescence from this illness (6th February 1808) that she wrote thus to her friend Dr. Whalley: "I thankfully acknowledge that to be out of bed, and to be able to employ myself, is, after all I have endured, positive enjoyment, though interrupted by as much pain as I can well contrive to bear. I have not been out since the first week in October, it is true; but then, who has so pleasant a prison, so many alleviations? And how gentle, how merciful, are these warnings and weanings from a world to which, whatever are our trials, we are still apt to be too fondly attached!" On her partial recovery, the first object of her interest was her schools. The next was the execution of a plan which, during the tedious months of sickness, had occupied her thoughts, even when too much sympathizing with a suffering body to assume any very symmetrical arrangement. On the education of her own sex, so as best to promote domestick happiness, national prosperity, and their own individual welfare in time and eternity, she had treated, as her talent, experience, and observation authorized, from the chair of the preceptress. But the most important sphere of female action, the conjugal relation, where woman has no alternative but duteously to fulfil or rebelliously countervail the great design entrusted her by her Creator, to be an immortal "help meet" for an immortal partner, whose temporal happiness always must, and whose eternal welfare frequently may, depend on her fidelity and affection; that relation, where the woman's part comprises the

initiatory and most delicate provinces of education, and which thus makes the character and direction of her influence of inestimable importance to the individual and collective interests of society, — had not, as yet, been specifically and formally treated by Mrs. More. Nor was the subject without its difficulties. The duties of a wife, great rather by their number, frequency, and effect, than by their prominent and distinctive character, and embracing shades as well as substances of conduct, seemed to defy definition and classification; it was scarcely practicable to enumerate and assign

> " ——————— those graceful acts,
> Those thousand decencies that daily flow
> From all her words and actions, mix'd with love
> And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd
> Union of mind :———[1] "

While formal precepts, which a child might receive with deference from the lip of age and experience, a matron, whatever her youth, might conceive herself, by her very position, authorized to treat with less respect; especially when the counsel proceeded from one who had never been called to practise the duties she recommended: and this disposition would exist precisely in a direct proportion as the advice was required. It remained, therefore, to insinuate rather than enforce, and to pourtray than to describe. In the *narrative* form, all the perfections of a wife might be exhibited in their minutest details and most delicate gradations;

[1] Paradise Lost, viii. 591.

while, so far from giving offence to any, the pleasing picture would excite rather the imitation of all. There is a vitality, too, in narrative, which no merely preceptive treatise can possess; and narrative would ensure a wider range of readers; many who would, on no account, open a *dissertation* on any thing, being eager to devour whatever might appear in the form of a novel or tale. In the selection of this vehicle for her instructions, she was, probably, influenced also by the great success of her Cheap Repository Tracts, and by a suggestion she had received from Mr. Wilberforce about four years previous, when he urged her to "lend a helping hand to the Christian Observer," by contributions of this description. "My idea was and is," says Mr. Wilberforce, "that you should write some religious and moral novels, stories, tales,— call 'em what you will,—illustrative of character and principles. *The Cheap Repository tales, a little raised in their subjects, are the very things I want.*" [1]

Such were the considerations which resulted in that beautiful and perfect creation of Mrs. More's genius, the "Lucilla Stanley" of "Cœlebs in search of a Wife"; the very perfection of which, acknowledged by all, has, by some, been urged as a fault, being unnatural and impossible. But it is a fault which might, with equal reason, be charged on the Venus of the Medici. Lucilla Stanley was drawn for a model; and it is the artist's highest praise to

[1] Life of Wilberforce, vol. iii. p. 67.

have attained that perfection at which she avowedly aimed. Milton's Eve in Paradise was the study for this picture. That faultless moral beauty is here transplanted from the ambrosial bowers of the yet fresh and sinless world, to play her part, uncontaminated, amid the bustle of fallen society in modern days; and well indeed she sustains it. With the most sterling masculine intellectual acquirements, and the most varied and elegant female accomplishments, there is an utter absence of pretension and display, and the most methodical and exact attention to family and household duties. The flatteries of the frivolous libertine, even though invested with the glitter of a coronet, find no responding vanity in her breast; with mildest but coldest contempt she awes into silence the impertinences of obtrusive folly. Her views, habits, sentiments, opinions, are, with the most exquisite skill, brought into relief by the other characters of the piece; in her intercourse with whom we see, with unclouded distinctness, the course which a Christian lady ought to pursue on all imaginable occasions. With all the truest graces of feminine refinement, Lucilla desires to know nothing of those shuddering sensibilities which shrink from the contemplation of human suffering. Her active benevolence, like all her other virtues, flows from the same perennial spring, a pure and deeply cherished Christianity. Lucilla is, indeed, a finished picture from a sketch already drawn by Mrs. More in her Strictures on Female Education, in a passage which leaves nothing to be

added, as it admits not of any diminution. "The profession of ladies to which the bent of *their* instruction should be turned, is that of daughters, wives, mothers, and mistresses of families. They should be therefore trained with a view to these several conditions, and be furnished with a stock of ideas, and principles, and qualifications, and habits, ready to be applied and appropriated, as occasion may demand, to each of these respective situations. For though the arts which merely embellish life may claim admiration, yet, when a man of sense comes to marry, it is not merely a creature who can paint, and play, and sing, and draw, and dress, and dance; it is a being who can comfort and counsel him; one who can reason, and reflect, and feel, and judge, and discourse, and discriminate; one who can assist him in his affairs, lighten his cares, soothe his sorrows, purify his joys, strengthen his principles, and educate his children." Nor are the other characters of the tale less admirably executed in their way. The juxtaposition of the faultless model makes their defects the more apparent, and errors in opinion and practice are displayed and confuted with a clearness which, to some minds at least, no formal demonstration could surpass. "Cœlebs," however, notwithstanding its extensive circulation, labours under the disadvantage of appearing heavy to the mere novel-reader, while its novel-like exterior produces a prejudice in minds of another cast. To the mere novel-reader it *must* appear heavy, for *it is no more a novel than the dialogues of Plato.* Like

"Rasselas," it is, in fact, a *treatise*. It is a *narrative essay* on the choice of a wife; an essay treating its subject in the most complete and ample manner, and containing, besides, a great body of useful and practical information on subjects of importance and interest.

In December 1808, "Cœlebs" issued from the press. The authoress assumed a still deeper *incognita* than on some former occasions. In writing to Mr. Davies on the subject, she says, "I believe we grow more timid as we grow older. This increasing diffidence compels me to act against not only *your* judgment, but *that of my whole family*, who are unanimous as to my putting my name to 'Cœlebs.' I must positively refuse it. Should it be, as you suspect, discovered, I shall be sorry for it." The immediate and unprecedented popularity of the work, however, proved how little it would have owed to the mere lustre of her name. It produced an intense excitement. A very eminent literary character, not over-friendly to the authoress, is said to have taken up "Cœlebs" just as he was undressed and stepping into bed; and to have been so much interested in the book, as to have sat up the rest of the night to read it. The first edition was sold in less than a fortnight; twelve editions were printed in the first year of its publication; and it has since gone through five more,—comprising, in the whole, 21,000 copies. The profits of the first year amounted to 2,000*l*. In America the sale was even yet greater, where 30,000 copies were dis-

posed of before Mrs. More's death. It was rapidly translated into the continental languages; and, from Switzerland, Mrs. More received a painting of considerable merit, representing one of the most interesting scenes in the narrative,—"a subject not unworthy of Raphael."[1] As an illustration of the liberty enjoyed by the press under the dominion of the Corsican usurper, it may be worth observation that the French translation of "Cœlebs" (by Mrs. More's friend, the late M. Huber Strutt, of Geneva,) was no less than *six months* passing through various examining and licensing departments in Paris. The single expression "brave Spaniards," in allusion to the infant patriotism which had just then begun, with Herculean arm, to grapple with the serpent invaders of Spain, would have amounted to a prohibition, if it had not been expunged! Such was the practical freedom of publication bestowed by him whose slavish idolaters in this country were perpetually shouting, "the Liberty of the Press!—it is like the air we breathe!—if we have it not, we die!"

Mrs. More made a firmer stand against inquiries about the parentage of "Cœlebs" than she had cared to do in other instances; but it was impossible to wear the veil very long. The "wicked internal evidence," as Mrs. More humorously expresses it in writing to Dr. Gray, shone through every attempt at concealment. "Cœlebs," says

[1] Cœlebs, ch. xli. Works, vol. vii. p. 466. See 465, 466.

Mr. Wilberforce, in his diary, "is variously talked of. The Henry Thorntons affirm that it cannot be Hannah More's, and are strong against it; surely without reason." — "Reading 'Cœlebs' in the afternoon, and much pleased with it; it is Hannah More's all over."[1] The Bath booksellers, very unjustifiably, advertised it in their shop windows, with her name. Letters, some addressing her as the author, others distinctly putting the question of the authorship, reached her daily from every quarter. Writing to Dr. Gray, she says, "I received one letter from another dignitary in the Church, beginning 'My dear Cœlebs;' another, 'Aut Erasmus, aut,' &c." Thus, in about a month, she was compelled to acknowledge the offspring which its lineaments so palpably betrayed. The fourth edition bore her name. She had then to undergo a sharp volley of interrogatories about the characters; for so well had she studied that human nature to which they belonged, that every figure in the group was supposed to be a portrait; but she constantly denied that they had any corporeal prototypes. Some, however, would brook no assurances on the subject. It has been even said, though the anecdote is here only mentioned to be discredited, that some lady, who supposed herself to be satirized in the character of Mrs. Ranby, called on Mrs. More, and sent in her card, with that name; and when Mrs. More, surprised, came down into her parlour to meet the unknown,

[1] Life of Wilberforce, vol. iii. p. 399.

she found there an acquaintance habited in appropriate costume, who, with no small acrimony, proceeded to comment on the injustice done her in the caricature; and could scarcely be persuaded to receive her solemn declaration that no such idea had ever been contemplated.

I have stated that Cœlebs was written during Mrs. More's *partial* recovery. This qualification is the very least that can be allowed, when we take into consideration her affecting expression in a letter to Dr. Gray, when apologizing for the defects of her work: "*Never, I believe, was more pain bound up in two volumes.*" And, shortly after the publication, her sister Martha wrote thus to Dr. Whalley:—"I think my sister Hannah had scarcely a worse winter during her famous illness. Her bile, and spasms in her head and face, have been dreadful, and, this week, as outrageous all as ever. She is at last grown very pale and thin; so you see the uncommon success and celebrity of darling Cœlebs could not procure her one hour's ease." "She is in such a constant state of suffering, that flattery, poured in as it is upon her, could never come at a time when it could do less harm. This great success, however, must naturally be mixed with some censure, in a work one of whose professed objects it is to attack many prevailing customs, habits, and manners."

The censure alluded to by Mrs. Martha More was, however, comparatively inconsiderable; and it spoke favourably for the altered condition of society, that a work professing such objects should

meet with such extraordinary encouragement, and so little opposition. Even the Edinburgh Review, little favourable to Mrs. More or her principles, did not deny it some excellence, although, as might be expected, and as Mrs. More could not have deprecated, her new experiment provoked a few *bruta fulmina* from the northern horizon. An attack from Mr. Cumberland was less excusable, since certainly proceeding from personal hostility, the cause of which it is not possible to assign precisely, although it is believed to have had some connection with the effect of "Percy" on one of his plays.

The ingenuity with which Mrs. More contrived to interweave an after-thought into the texture of a complete work, was never more happily exemplified than in the second edition of Cœlebs. Nothing, in her opinion, had been more injurious to religion than attacks on the clergy. The efficacy of this mode of warfare appeared to be well understood by revolutionists, infidels, and sectaries, who employed it largely and unscrupulously; and in France, as formerly in England, the altar had been assailed as the bulwark of the throne. It was, accordingly, the principle of Mrs. More, avowed, as we have seen, in her letter to Bishop Beadon, always to introduce into her narrative tracts "an exemplary parish minister," by way of counter-working the mischief produced by the "pestilent pamphlets" of the "Jacobinical writers." Nor was this practice abandoned in "Cœlebs," where "Dr. Barlow" is a beautiful model of the faithful

and pious Christian pastor. There was, however, a popular class of authors, with small political or religious bias, who had formed an imaginary abstraction of the clerical character, presenting it recommended indeed by amiability and benevolence, but rendered ridiculous by an exaggerated simplicity. These writers, by depriving the function of its dignity, did more, perhaps, to lessen its influence than those open opponents whose views were known, and against whom the reader stood upon his guard. The picture of "Dr. Barlow" is as distinct, indeed, from those of Parson Adams and Dr. Syntax, as from those libellous and revolting daubs which were dashed off for no other purpose than to bring the clergy, and the Gospel which they preached, into hatred with well-meaning but credulous and ignorant people. But, though equally *distinct from* both styles of misrepresentation, its very nature forbad it to be equally *opposed to* both. Mrs. More was, accordingly, apprehensive that something more than this character would be necessary to convey the censure which she wished to pass on those writers, whose erroneous descriptions of the clerical character had done so much to lower the popular estimate of its dignity, and to diminish the influence of the ministerial office. She therefore determined to introduce a separate chapter, expressly for elucidating the scope of Dr. Barlow's character. This is the xxvii.th; the coherence of which with its context is so complete and artful, that perhaps no reader, unaware of the fact, ever entertained a suspicion of the

circumstances under which that portion of the work was written.[1]

In the letter to Mr. Davies, which accompanied the manuscript of this chapter, Mrs. More writes, "I shall think of your suggestion respecting a work on the Scriptures, but my wretched state of health allows me little capacity of employment." It does not appear that the "suggestion" was ever complied with, for "The Bible Rhymes" could scarcely be designated by so grave a title, and there is no reason to believe that the idea of that little book had then occurred to Mrs. More. Indeed, the state of her health, above alluded to, had already determined her to close her literary career. In the letter to Dr. Gray last quoted, she says, "My paltry labours are now completed. I have hung up my harp. I fear I should have done it sooner, and that the suffering body will be seen in 'Cœlebs' to have accelerated the decays of mind."

The "fear" was, indeed, utterly unfounded; and a comparative restoration of health enabled her to reverse a determination to which she never could have adhered while she had strength to instruct, or while a soul needed instruction.

Though "Cœlebs," by the very constitution of its plan, necessarily discussed the reciprocal influences of morality and religion, yet this was but

[1] The last scene of "Moses in the Bulrushes" was added in like manner, to ensure to Mr. Cadell the sale of the "Sacred Dramas" after the expiration of his copyright. Nothing, however, can be more integral than the piece with this addition.

the accident, not the substance, of the work. The subject, however, was one to the formal discussion of which none could be more competent than Hannah More; its importance had been estimated, and its nature perceived, through the popularity of "Cœlebs," in quarters where, before, it had scarcely attracted attention; and the publick mind was well prepared to listen to formal instruction from so accomplished a mistress of pure and hallowed casuistry. She, therefore, purposed to treat the whole question in its two bearings; and as, in her essays on the manners and religion of the great and fashionable, she had separately examined the principle and practice; so, here, to investigate separately the natures of *practical* piety and *devotional* morality; with this only difference; that, as she was no longer writing to win an audience, but to instruct voluntary listeners, she would invert the former order of the subjects, and, laying the foundation of religion, proceed to erect the structure of morality.

While engaged in the plan and arrangement of this work, she received from her friend the Bishop of London a note, the meaning of which she was unable to conjecture, except that it solicited her prayers for him in a position of great difficulty: and, in a few days after, she received another, merely informing her that the difficulty was past. Before she could obtain an explanation, intelligence came of the death of her venerable friend, which took place about ten days after the date of his second note. It appeared that the Bishop, in

a languishing state, was informed that the Prince of Wales was about to patronize a club, the meetings of which were to take place on alternate *Sundays* during the winter season. The infirm prelate immediately took the resolution to rally his remaining powers of mind and body for a last effort, to prevail on the prince, through a personal interview, to abandon his purpose. It was this difficulty—the difficulty, in the bishop's exhausted condition, of mustering physical ability to go to Carlton House, and to argue the point—the difficulty, it might be, of persuading the prince to abandon a course to which he stood committed—that the notes alluded to, and in which the bishop requested the prayers of Hannah More. The design was executed; the dying bishop was supported to the presence of the prince, who informed him that he would give immediate orders for the alteration of the day to Saturday. The reply was the bishop's *nunc dimittis;* who, in a few days afterwards, departed in peace—from sleep into death. A higher tribute to individual piety than that which was paid to Hannah More on this occasion, it is impossible to conceive. The great and unusual honour of express commendation in an episcopal charge might be attributed to friendly partiality or mere critical approval; but no such solution is admissible here. A father in the Church, a man of mature piety and judgment, has reached that period when all are most anxious to be right, and when all are indisposed alike to bestow and to receive compliments. Before he leaves the world,

he is anxious to perform one more work for his Saviour's glory; and, for aid in this work, he desires for the intercession of those whose prayers are most acceptable before the throne of mercy. He is extensively acquainted, nay, intimate, with the holy and wise of his generation, and he seeks the prayers of—Hannah More. Nor did the bishop this from the mere celebrity which she had acquired by her good deeds and religious writings; he had known her most intimately through the greatest partof her life, and, with this knowledge, his judgment as a dying man was that Hannah More was one whose prayers should be an object of interest to every Christian. Of all the testimonies to her excellence which she received through a life prolonged much beyond the usual term of mortal years, none could have afforded her higher gratification than this; because it not only proved how dearly she was beloved by one whose affection was an object to prize, but it was a consolatory confirmation of the testimony of conscience that her piety was indeed genuine and practical: and it must have operated as a cheering encouragement to proceed with a work in which, more methodically than ever, she was about to call the attention of the world to the religion and morality of the New Testament, and when her sensitive and self-examining spirit naturally reverted to the question, "Thou which teachest another, teachest thou thyself?"[1]

[1] Rom. ii. 21.—Mrs. More testified her regard to the memory of Bishop Porteus by erecting a cenotaph in the grounds at Barley

Piety,—but "practical piety,"—not an abstract sentiment, but an active principle,—was her first theme; and with this title a book appeared in the early part of the year 1811.[1] It was written with scarcely an interval of health or ease; and while her soul seems to have gained from bodily suffering, her mind appears to have sustained no loss. She speaks to the heart with an animating and awakening power; but she is no less convincing to the understanding. The solemnity and humility which inspire the following extract from her Preface may be received as an accurate transcript of her own heart, proving how deeply she

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Wood, represented in the vignette at the head of this Chapter, and bearing this inscription:—

"To Beilby Porteus,
Late Lord Bishop of London,
In grateful Memory
Of long and faithful Friendship.—H. M."

The character of this eminent Christian and faithful pastor is beautifully drawn by the same pen in the work which was then in Mrs. More's contemplation:—"The fine talents of this lamented prelate (she writes), uniformly devoted to the purpose for which God gave them—his life, directed to those duties, to which his high professional station called him—his Christian graces, those engaging manners which shed a soft lustre on the firm fidelity of his friendship—that kindness which was ever flowing from his heart to his lips—the benignity and candour which distinguishes, not his conversation only, but his conduct—these, and all the other amiable qualities, that gentle temper and correct cheerfulness with which he adorned society, will ever endear his memory to all who knew him intimately; and let his friends remember that to imitate his virtues will be the best proof of their remembering them."—*Practical Piety*, chap. xix. (Works, vol. vii. p. 349.)

[1] "Practical Piety; or, the Influence of the Religion of the Heart on the Conduct of the Life."

had received the impression of the Gospel seal, in the prominence which eternity possessed in her thoughts, and in her mean estimation of attainments which few in the later ages of the Church have rivalled:—"The writer has endeavoured to address herself as a Christian who must die soon, to Christians who must die certainly. She trusts that she shall not be accused of erecting herself into a censor, but be considered as one who writes with a real consciousness that she is far from having reached the attainments she suggests; with a heartfelt conviction of the danger of holding out a standard too likely to discredit her own practice. She writes not with the assumption of superiority, but with a deep practical sense of the infirmities against which she has presumed to caution others. She wishes to be understood as speaking the language of sympathy rather than of dictation; of feeling, rather than of document. So far from fancying herself exempt from the evils on which she has animadverted, her very feeling of those evils has assisted her in their delineation. Thus this interior sentiment of her own deficiencies which might be urged as a disqualification, has, she trusts, enabled her to point out dangers to others. If the patient cannot lay down rules for the cure of a reigning disease, much less effect the cure; yet, from the symptoms common to the same malady, he who labours under it may suggest the case feelingly, if not scientifically. He may substitute experience in default of skill; he may insist on the value of the remedy he has neglected, as well as recommend that from which he has

found benefit." While we are thus admitted to view the seriousness and self-abasement of this great Christian, we are, in another passage, introduced to the anxiety which she entertained for the success of her work in the only sense in which she understood the term: "She (the writer) is singularly happy in the affectionate regard of a great number of amiable young persons, who may peruse with additional attention sentiments which come recommended to them by the warmth of their own attachment more than by any claim of merit in the writer. Is there not something in personal knowledge, something in the feelings of endeared acquaintance, which, by that hidden association whence so much of our undefined pleasure is derived, if it does not impart new force to old truths, may excite a new interest in considering truths which are known? Her concern for these engaging persons extends beyond the transient period of present intercourse. It would shed a ray of brightness on her parting hour if she could hope that any caution here held out, any principle here suggested, any habit here recommended, might be of use to any one of them, when the hand which now guides the pen can be no longer exerted to their service. This would be remembering their friend in a way which would evince the highest affection in them—which would confer the truest honour on herself." This consolation Mrs. More experienced—not exactly, indeed, in the closing scene of her days, when she retained little consciousness even of what was passing around her; but during several severe

accessions of illness, which develope the true moral of Hannah More's deathbed; from one of which, as will presently be seen, she republished a part of her "Practical Piety." The sale of this work proved that the publick were now as ready to welcome Mrs. More in the character of professed instructress as in that of religious fabulist. It exceeded "Cœlebs" by one in the number of editions, and by three thousand in that of copies. In the following year Mrs. More published her work on the other branch of her subject, under the title of "Christian Morals," which, however unaccountably, never obtained so high a popularity as the elder sister. Mrs. More herself considered it the superior, and though this, under the circumstances, would be far from proof that such was the fact, most readers of both works will acknowledge that they are separately incomplete. They rise in just gradations and proportions to their apex—the concluding sentence in the "Christian Morals;" a study, doubtless, from her own heart, and therefore not irrelevant to the record of her life:—"Thus is the image of Divine goodness more clearly, though still imperfectly, reflected in the confirmed Christian—the original character of the human heart, as it came from the hands of the Creator, is about to be re-instated in its pristine purity. Sin, the lawless tenant, not the native proprietor, of the mansion, will soon be totally expelled; in the meantime, the primitive principle is radicated; the usurper is dethroned, if not altogether dispossessed; he is conquered, if not

absolutely expelled; if he sometimes disturb, he can no longer destroy. The exile returns to his forsaken home, the prodigal to his father's house, the pardoned penitent to his God."

"Christian Morals" passed through eleven editions; and nearly 10,000 copies have been sold.

In the year which followed the publication of what may be styled the completion of Mrs. More's code of practical and devotional Christianity, she was called to a new test of those principles which she had so successfully recommended, because she had so practically exemplified their virtue. Her life, on the whole, had hitherto been very far from unhappy; for religion had cheered the hours of sickness and suffering, and conscious innocence had triumphed in the struggle with calumny. In her friends, in her books, in her grounds, in her active philanthropy, she found constant and pleasurable engagement. Her sisters shared her self-imposed labours with all her own zeal and industry. Tenderly united from their earliest infancy, they had learned to entertain but one interest and one heart; and from the troubles of the world each had her refuge in the ever-peaceful and sheltering sanctuary of HOME: and those who may continually reckon on the warm sunlight of but one kind word or look within that holy inclosure, may afford to despise the clouds and storms which darken or agitate the world without. Like the children of Israel, amid surrounding darkness, they have "light in their dwellings;" and the palpable mist of indifference, rancour,

and ingratitude, which spreads so widely over this earth, cannot cast one shadow within those privileged limits; while the minion of fame or fortune, homeless, though the lord of domains, the applauded and the envied, would often eagerly barter the throne of the Pharaohs for the meanest hearth in the precincts of Goshen. The first upbreaking of such a society as that of Barley Wood could not but be a severe calamity. Nor was it only the separation of a household united in heart. Accustomed to depend on each other, the sisters filled each her peculiar and appropriate province. "There was a place assigned to every one of the sisterhood, and not one could be spared without creating a void."[1] The event, however, was one which a wise and religious mind, such as that of Hannah, could not fail to contemplate and provide for. In her very last work she had adverted to a due preparation for it, undoubtedly not unconscious that she might soon be required to practise her precepts in cases for which all her former losses were only warnings and exercises. "Even in the sorest affliction," she writes, "the loss of those we love, there may be a mercy impenetrable to us." "If the affliction be not improved, it is, indeed, unspeakably heavy. If the loss of our friend does not help to detach us from the world, we have the calamity without the indemnification; we are deprived of our treasure without any advantage to ourselves. If the loss of him we loved does not

[1] Wilberforce's Diary, Life of Wilberforce, vol. iv. p. 148.

make us more earnest to secure our salvation, we may lose at once our friend and our soul. Sufferings are the only relicks of the true cross; and when divine grace turns them to our spiritual good, they almost perform the miracles which blind superstition ascribes to the false one. God mercifully takes from us what we have not courage to offer Him; but if, when He resumes it, He sanctifies the loss, let us not repine. It was His while it was ours. He was the proprietor while we were the possessors."[1] Yet, however Hannah might be *prepared* to part with her sisters, there is every reason to believe it was a calamity which she did not *expect*. There was, indeed, every human expectation that she, the weakest and sickliest of the family, would be the first to break a link in the chain. But the result was opposite: she lived to see the whole fabrick dissolved; the first instance occurring on Easter Sunday 1813, when the eldest sister, Mary, fell asleep in that Saviour who, as on that day, triumphed for her over sin and the grave.[2]

The death of this sister, and Mrs. More's consequent feelings, are briefly but impressively described in the following extract of a letter to Dr. Whalley:—"This first breach in our family society cannot but be deeply felt, though death has seldom

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1 Christian Morals, chap iv. (Works. vol. ix. p. 76.)

2 Mrs. More used to notice it as remarkable that this was the first death that had occurred in any of the four houses which she and her sisters had built and inhabited, the first of them fifty years before.

appeared more stripped of his terror. She kept her bed but five days; and though reduced to infant weakness, her sufferings were not very great. She slept the greater part of last week; when awake, her mind generally wandered; but at every interval she manifested a patience and resignation I have never seen exceeded. Not a murmur escaped her, except now and then, that her release came so slow. She was not only willing, but impatient, to depart; and has bequeathed us all a lesson which I pray we may never forget. We know not how very soon we may be called on to put it in practice. May we also be ready!" In a letter to the Right Honourable J. H. Addington, containing nearly the same account, Mrs. More adds, "She liked to talk of death, and selected herself the poor men who should convey her to her narrow cell."

The character of this sister has been aptly described, by some of those who best knew her, as partaking of *the Roman modification of stoicism.* She was the Christian Portia of private and ordinary life. Her views of conduct were drawn from the same pure fountain as those of her sisters; but they were put in practice after a fashion peculiarly her own. Inflexible of purpose, she never made the smallest concessions to self-indulgence, whether in others or herself. The fatigue she encountered in learning French, and imparting this knowledge to her sisters, has been already noticed; and the same spirit of steady endurance and perseverance prevailed in all she did. She was the *censor* of the family, but she was none the less

beloved for the plainness and austerity of her demeanour, which was only the garb which her affection assumed. In proof, at once, of her bluntness, and of that loyalty which she cherished in common with her sisters, two anecdotes of her may here find a place. A naval officer, who had become somewhat tainted with Jacobinism, ventured, in her presence, to speak disrespectfully of his king. Laying her hand forcibly upon him, she proceeded to remind him whose pay he was receiving, and to rebuke him in a strain of such grave dignity, that he sat down silent and ashamed. When at Weymouth, and seeing the king walking upon the esplanade, her affectionate fervour carried her steps over the space which the respectfulness of better-regulated loyalty had interposed between the people and their sovereign, and she audibly testified her attachment to the royal office and person.

Mrs. More, in a very weak and suffering state, took refuge with her kind friend Lady Olivia Sparrow, at Brampton Park, near Huntingdon. Hence she visited, with her sister Martha, some of her more intimate and confidential friends in Kent and Surrey. During this short excursion, undertaken to refresh her mind and recruit her vital powers, the reflections excited by the last dispensation were enforced by several circumstances. On her way to pay a valedictory visit to Lord Barham, then upwards of eighty years of age, she received intelligence of his death; and, on her return, she visited Garrick's villa and Strawberry

Hill, the latter then in the occupation of Lady Waldegrave. Mrs. Garrick being from home, Mrs. More had leisure to meditate on the scenes which were now the sole memorial of a vanished generation of the great, the witty, the learned, and the gay.

The effect, however, of their bereavement on the surviving sisterhood was that with which such warnings are wont to be accompanied in established Christians. The night, "when no man can work," had already spread its shadow over their faithful fellow-labourer; and, mindful of the divine inference thus solemnly commended to them, to work "while it is day,"[1]

"Some natural tears they dropt, but wip'd them soon."[2]

They even reproved those who wept on offering condolence; and they sought at once to console themselves, and to apply the warning, by the resumption of their benevolent labours, calculated, beyond all others, to heal the wounded spirit; as the Christian minister can attest, whose experience echoes a truth which many have felt deeply, but which never, perhaps, was so well expressed as by the Christian poet:

"When sorrow all the heart would ask,
We need not shun our daily task,
Or hide ourselves for calm:
The herbs we seek to heal our wo,
Familiar by our pathway grow;
Our common air is balm."[3]

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[1] John, ix. 4. [2] Par. Lost, xii. sub fin.
[3] Christian Year, First Sunday after Easter.

The credit of the Mendip schools had entirely righted from the partial shock which it had sustained in the misrepresentations afloat during the Blagdon controversy; and their patronesses conducted them with vigour and success. Only three, however, now remained, Shipham, Cheddar, and Nailsea; so that Mrs. More used to tell her friends that she had now "put her schools upon the peace establishment." The increasing age of the sisters rendered it impossible to conduct operations on the former extensive scale. The annual celebrations of the schools were consequently dropped; and though those of the clubs were continued, and, indeed, continue to the present time, they were no longer attended with the same degree of display, or the same crowds of visitors from distant parts of the kingdom. But these recommendations had become less necessary; the merits both of schools and clubs were now perfectly understood by all classes; the parents of the schoolchildren, and the women who were members of the benefit societies, needed no further inducement to maintain the connection than the advantages they were deriving from it; while patronage required no other stimulus than a simple statement of the operations of twenty years. In addition to her efforts in this department of beneficence, Hannah imposed on herself another task. St. Paul, she had observed, frequently commends his own example to the churches whom he addresses.[1] He

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 16. xi. 1.; Phil. iii. 17. iv. 9.; 2 Thess. iii. 9.

laboured no less by this than by his precepts to convey to their apprehensions that image of Christ which he sought to form in their hearts; and so faithfully and successfully, that the spirit of infallible truth required from him his commendation of his own example. Mrs. More regarded such texts as intended no less for the instruction of the Church at large than for that of those particular branches to whom they were at first addressed. If the only perfect pattern could alone be propounded as universally to be followed, still it might assist the Christian to see how fairly it had been copied in one who was merely human, and shew him what grace might enable him to become. This might perhaps be the very design of inspiration in recording so many particulars of St. Paul's history and conduct, and so emphatically and repeatedly pressing the contemplation of his example. The different position of the modern Christian was not a sufficient objection to this view. The modern Christian is not called to the same trials with his Saviour; and yet there is a sense in which every Christian must "bear the cross and come after" Him, or he could not be His disciple.[1] In the same manner every Christian might be a follower of Paul, however widely external circumstances might differ. The *spirit* of Paul's example might be caught; we might learn from him to act as he would have acted in our circumstances; we might see how he

[1] Luke xiv. 27.

applied his Master's principles in cases differing in externals from his Master's situation, and might thence obtain light to direct our footsteps also under the altered position of modern Christianity. This fertile argument Mrs. More now resolved, without further delay, to develope for the benefit of the Church; and, in the year 1815, issued from the press her "Essay on the Character and Practical Writings of St. Paul;" which has since passed through seven editions, comprising 7,500 copies.

During the composition of this work, and immediately afterwards, it was the divine pleasure to multiply to Mrs. More instances of the instability and precariousness of the present existence. The first of these shall be detailed in her own words in a letter to Dr. Whalley: "I think, my dear friend, you will unite with me in thanking God for the marvellous deliverance He has wrought for me. I was standing in my room alone about noon, near some books, with one side to the fire. I was, providentially, wrapt in three shawls for a bad cold. I heard a sort of roaring behind me, which I concluded was the wind in the chimney, and did not look round till I saw the flames dancing on the ceiling over my head. I then found my clothes were on fire. In vain I tried to extinguish it. Against my custom, I had locked the door; this caused a little delay. I did not attempt to run down stairs, thinking it would fan the flame, but stood at top, calling for help. When I saw them coming up, I walked back to

my room. I was become behind one sheet of flame. A dear generous friend, Miss Roberts, took me up as if I had been a child, laid me on the floor, and, thrusting both hands into the flames, tore off my clothes; of one shawl not a thread was left; the other was nearly reduced to ashes; my other clothes much burned. Only my arm and shoulder were much scorched; but my deliverer's hands were so terribly scorched that she could not feed herself for some weeks.[1] Thanks to a merciful God, we are both quite recovered. Another minute, and nothing could have saved me."

Mrs. More's demeanour on this occasion is thus described by her sister Martha in a letter to the Rev. R. C. Whalley: — "My sister's composure during the whole exceeds credibility; not a scream or the least agitation of feature. Upon

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1 This heroick lady was indeed so much burned that it was found necessary to *saw* off her ring. On this occasion Mrs. More wore a gown made of a kind of stuff called *lasting*. Some heartless pretender to wit took opportunity from the circumstance to pen these lines in a Bristol newspaper:

"Vulcan to scorch thy gown in vain essays;
Apollo strives in vain to fire thy lays;
Hannah! the cause is visible enough;
Stuff is thy raiment, and thy writings—*stuff*."

Which were met by the following happy rejoinder from the pen of a friend: —

"Cloth'd in his filth, lo! Epigram appears,
His face distorted by a thousand sneers;
Why this attack is 'visible enough;
The scribbler envies Hannah's *lasting stuff*."

my mentioning this to her afterwards, she replied she thought all was over,—making a bustle would answer no end; and she was striving to turn her thoughts another way."

From the shock of this alarm she had scarcely had time to recover, when her old and valued friends, Lady Waldegrave, Mr. Henry Thornton, Mr. John Bowdler[1], and Dr. Buchanan, within three weeks of each other, left the present scene; and in a little more than a twelvemonth were followed, on the 14th of June 1816, by her sister Elisabeth.

If we would distinguish these amiable women by any special definitions, Elisabeth might be called *the most feminine* of the sisters. In all the others there was something prominent, decided, distinctive; something emphatically opposed to the dictum of the satirist,

"Most women have no characters at all." [2]

Elisabeth, to a cursory observer, might seem to exemplify the sentiment; but though her excel-

[1] Mrs. More thus gives her testimony to his excellence, in a letter to the Right Honourable J. H. Addington:—"I am sure you are all sympathizing in the common grief for the irreparable loss of John Bowdler. To much genius, taste, literature, and delicacy of feeling, he added such piety as I have seldom seen united in any human being. There was a sort of sublimity and refinement in his character which, joined to his delicate health, always made me fear he would not be long an inhabitant of this world. Poor Miss ———— ! what a trial is hers! They were to have been married next month. There had been a very long and tender attachment between them, though, on account of his weak health, her parents caused the match to be delayed. This, I think, circumstances and all other things considered, is now a happiness."

[2] Pope, Moral Essays, ii. 2.

lence was of a less striking kind, it was no less genuine. Her virtues were softly and harmoniously blended in one smooth and even texture, presenting no prominences or angularities. She was formed for woman's ordinary province; to be the active but invisible agent in the conduct of a well-economized household; to cheer, support, and comfort others in their toils rather than to encounter personal fatigue; and yet to share with firmness any hardships or difficulties which circumstances might seem to demand. In the schools, her taste appeared in the superintendence of the *needlework;* in the house, in that of *domestick economy;* in literature, she preferred the exercise of the *affections* to that of the understanding. She was the WIFE of Barley Wood, and the loss was irreparable. This sketch of her character will prepare the reader to expect few particulars of Elisabeth More; yet one anecdote is in the memory of her friends which is quite characteristick, and worth recording. When conducting the school at Bristol, she happened one day to be passing through the street, when she saw an infant thrown from a window; she sprang forward instantly, spread her apron, and succeeded in catching the devoted babe unhurt. The circumstance was owing to a fit of temporary derangement on the part of the mother, who afterwards acknowledged very gratefully the kindness of her benefactress, and sent the child to the Misses More's school, where she was always an object of great interest with Elisabeth.

These repeated shocks were not without effect on Mrs. More's debilitated frame; but, though suffering from severe illness, she held the call of her country and of her religion too sacred to allow herself what might seem no more than a necessary repose.

The winter of 1816-17 was marked by popular discontents. The burdens which the war imposed upon the people would, it was rashly concluded by the multitude, cease with its termination; and plenty was, in their idea, indissolubly associated with peace. Nearly two years had now expired since the treaty of Paris had definitively concluded the twenty years' war; but the anticipated blessings of peace were not realized to the amount of popular expectation; while some branches of the manufacturing interest, and most of the agricultural, were even suffering in consequence, as well as through the unfavourable summer of 1816. It was forgotten that the expulsion of a deadly disease does not immediately place the patient in a state of robust health; and that even some derangements of the system are often unavoidable, if not indispensable to recovery. Hence a reaction was beginning to take place in the minds of those who had cheerfully borne the burdens of the war, in the self-assumed faith, that its close would instantly reinstate the country in its highest prosperity. Deceived, as they thought, by the principles they had adopted and defended, at the risk of life and expense of income, they were open to the enticements of the very sophistry which they had so

perseveringly and gallantly combated. Nor were designing demagogues wanting to goad the ignorant and distressed to acts of open violence. Reform, the standing watchword of hungry patriots; repeal of the corn laws; vote by ballot; and various other nostrums equally efficacious, were demanded by mobs who knew not the meaning of the words they used, much less the tendency of the measures for which they clamoured.[1] Tumultuous assemblies took place in the bosom of the capital; the houses of unpopular legislators were attacked; gunshops were plundered; and military interference became necessary. Even the life of the Regent was not deemed too sacred to be the object of open attack, when on his return from opening the parliament. Secret committees, under the name of "Hampden Clubs" and "Spencean Societies," were organized in all parts of the kingdom, where the most treasonable language was held. Pikes were manufactured, and military training practised. The symbols and designations of the Jacobins were adopted; and prints, openly recommending treason and violence, were liberally circulated. But not the least alarming feature of this period, was the renewed dissemination of infidel and blasphemous publications; and that

[1] Clarendon, whose work is almost as much prophecy as history, has pertinently observed: "The *militia* was the argument they found made much deeper impression on the people; *being totally ignorant what it was, or what the consequence of it might be; and so believing whatsoever they told them concerning it.*" — History of the Rebellion, book v.

not as formerly, by stealth and in secret, but with the most audacious effrontery, in shops and warehouses devoted to the purpose, where the pious were insulted, and the simple poisoned, by the abominations of Voltaire, Paine, and all the abortions of French and American infidelity, with gross parodies on the Holy Scriptures and the Liturgy of the Church, against which the enemies of Christianity have always warily directed their steadiest assaults. At this dangerous crisis, a committee was formed in London for the dispersion of writings calculated to counteract the prevalent delusion; and among the publications of this association, Mrs. More's tracts bore a prominent part. By this body she was now solicited to add a few tracts more especially adapted to the immediate exigency. She immediately gave up six weeks entirely to this object. The "Death of Mr. Fantom, the great Reformist," a continuation of one of her former tales, and one of the most impressive and popular antidotes to infidelity ever penned, was the result of this application. To this was added the exquisitely affecting story of "The Delegate," manifesting the spirit and reward of religion in distress, drawn out in bold and vigorous relief, against a dark background of infidelity and sedition. "Then came "A Vision," intituled "The Valley of Tears, or bear ye one another's Burdens," descriptive of the grievances and social duties of life. Some spirited ballads made up the contribution. These were written, as she expresses herself to Dr. Gray, partly in her

sick bed, and all in her sick room. One, indeed, was composed when a storm of thunder and lightning would not permit her to sleep. The titles of these were contrived to attract the classes they were intended to benefit, and, being hawked about the streets, were, doubtless, purchased by many of them. She became an occasional contributor to the Anti-Cobbett, a periodical written for the purpose of exposing the mischiefs contained in the principles of Cobbett's Political Register.[1] She also accommodated her "Village Politicks" to some altered circumstances of the time, and it was published under the title of "The Village Disputants," in which form it went through upwards of ten editions, and was, with the other tracts and songs, translated into Welsh, and extensively circulated in the principality.

Among the sufferers from the pressure of the times, none were more painfully distinguished than the miners of Shipham and Rowberrow, whose subsistence depended on the sale of the *lapis calaminaris*. The opening of the continent enabled the foreign trader to stock the market with the wrought material at lower cost than the English miner could supply the ore. If Mrs. More was one of those who exhorted the poor to bear unavoidable privations peaceably, and not increase their miseries by crime, she was no less forward, in lawful and liberal ways, to extricate them from their difficulties;—a praise, it is to be feared, not

[1] See Appendix (VII.)

equally due to many more noisy friends of the people. In the present instance, Hannah contributed 50*l.*; and, with the liberal aid and exertions of the late Right Hon. J. H. Addington, obtained a large subscription, the application of which she superintended, for buying the metal from the miners at the former price. This judicious charity not only rescued many hundreds of families from want, but so much attached the people to the principles of publick order and good conduct, that every man in Shipham signed an address to the Regent, offering assistance, if needed, in those troublous times.

On the 17th of May 1817 the third void was made in the little society of Barley Wood. Mrs. Sarah More had been for some months previous suffering intensely from dropsy and mortification of the leg, the fatal result of which she predicted from the first to a confidential servant, to whom she explained the disease with the utmost composure. From this time not an hour of the day passed, she said, in which she did not mentally offer the supplication in the Litany, "In the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, good Lord, deliver me!" And, after having exhibited no less proficiency in Christian patience than in the other graces which had so eminently adorned her long and useful life, she departed, strong in faith and hope, from the world of care and tribulation. When the severity of the disease extorted a groan, she reproached herself for departing from that entire submission for which she had so ardently

prayed. "Her sufferings," says Mrs. More in a letter to Dr. Gray, "were intense; her patience and resignation most exemplary. It was the most afflicted, and yet the most edifying dying bed I ever witnessed. She was given over for six weeks; and, though her tortures could only be surpassed by those of Damien on the wheel, she never prayed for recovery or ease, but for pardon of sin, and acceptance with God. It was a striking proof of the power and reality of religion, to see a person of such uncommon vivacity, high spirits, and a gaiety which age had not at all subdued, so invariably meek, and crying out in the midst of her agonies, 'It is all well!—it is all right!' This frame of mind, so long and so consistently sustained, has afforded us great consolation under our loss, which we feel severely, as she was the life of our little society, now, alas! reduced to only two!"—I have before me now a detail of this genuine Christian's expressions of deep penitence, faithful confidence, and joyful thanksgiving during the mortal conflict, taken down from her lips by a friend. Hannah once asked her, "Are you comfortable in your mind?" She replied, "I have no discomfort." In the midst of her acutest torments, she exclaimed, "Hallelujah! Praise the Lord, O my soul! Glory, honour, praise, and power to the Lamb!" "While she could articulate," says this document, "the praises of God were ever on her lips." Of all the sisters, with the exception of Hannah, Sarah was the most intellectual. Her cast of character was so deci-

dedly original, that her friend Sir James Stonhouse used to say she was a living contradiction of Solomon's position, and proved that there *was* something new under the sun. He had even made a collection of her brilliant sayings, under the title of *Sallians*. In her youth she wrote two novels, which obtained considerable popularity at that day. Hence she was colloquially distinguished among the sisters by the name of *Prosey*, as Hannah was by that of *Poetry:* though Sarah, occasionally, sacrificed to the Muses. A lively little satirical piece by her, suggested, probably, by the "Diable Boiteux," is still in the recollection of her friends; and I have now before me several little political squibs from her pen, which the lapse of time only has made obscure and uninteresting. She was an exquisite reader, and, when resident in Bristol, was in great request in this capacity in literary families. She was also conversant with the French and Italian writers. She composed, as has been noticed, several of the tracts in the "Cheap Repository." Her story of "Sorrowful Sam," was the means of converting a profligate drunkard and his ignorant family. At his death, he left a copy of that tract to each of his children, whom he solemnly charged to read it once a month. Sarah had been an active coadjutor of her sister Hannah in all her schemes, and the loss and the warning were proportionally felt. Her elder sisters had now all departed in the order of their age, and it was impossible not to feel that her own time was rapidly drawing on.

This reflection would have led her, by choice, into more meditative habits than her position permitted. But she was called to other things. Her meditations were too profitable to the world to be reserved for herself only. She still felt that her sphere was usefulness, not abstraction. Nor, indeed, was retirement possible. She was sought and pursued by all who wished for Christian instruction or intellectual pleasure; and her groves daily re-echoed the converse of the noble, the learned, and the holy, who crowded around her from every region of the world.

Among these was the Rev. Dr. Jebb, afterwards Bishop of Limerick; who, in a letter to Mr. Knox, has given the following graphick description of Barley Wood and its surviving inhabitants:— "Feeling, as they do very deeply, the sad breach made in their circle, they are wisely, cheerfully, and piously submissive to this appointment of Providence; and neither their talents, nor vivacity, are in the least subdued. I am disposed to believe that they will be blessed to the last with the retention of those faculties which they have employed so well. With Patty I had a long and interesting conversation, of the most strictly confidential nature, on the subject of which you are aware, and on which also I am hereafter to confer with you. This interesting woman is suffering, with exemplary patience, the most excruciating pain; not a murmur escapes, though, at night especially, groans and cries are inevitably extorted; and, the moment after the paroxysm,

she is ready to resume, with full interest and animation, whatever may have been the subject of conversation. Hannah is still herself: she took C. F.[1] and me a drive to Brockley Coombe; in the course of which, her anecdotes, her wit, her powers of criticism, and her admirable talent of recitation, had ample scope: poor I was, of course, put in requisition, and strove to acquit myself, not indeed as I wished, but as I could. It remains for me to say, that you hold a high place in the affection of both sisters; and they desired to be remembered to you, with all possible kindness and cordiality. On the whole, though not unmingled with melancholy, the impression of this visit to Barley Wood is predominantly agreeable. I might, indeed, use a stronger word. Differences of opinion there do, it cannot be denied, exist; but they are differences, on their part, largely the growth of circumstances; differences, too, which will vanish before the earliest beams of eternity. I parted with them, as noble creatures, whom, in this world, I never might again behold; and while I felt some pangs, which I would not willingly have relinquished, it was with deep comfort that I looked forward in hope to an hereafter, when we might meet without any of those drawbacks, in some shape or other, inseparable, perhaps, from the intercourse of mortals.

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"These invaluable friends, whose house, and

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[1] The Rev. Charles Forster.

whose hearts are alike hospitably open; whose unaffected piety is congenial to my best feelings, I would deliberately choose as companions *utriusque mundi;* not the frivolous and half-hearted associates of this life's fleeting hour, but spirits, with whom, I humbly trust, may be enjoyed an everlasting intercommunity."[1]

About a twelvemonth after, Mrs. More received the following letter from Sir Alexander Johnston, Chief Justice of the island of Ceylon:—

"Trafalgar Cottage, Cheltenham,

"Madam, 10th Sept. 1818.

"As it may not be uninteresting to you to hear that the moral influence of your valuable works has been very sensibly felt by the native inhabitants of Ceylon, I take the liberty, although I have not the honour of being personally known to you, to beg your acceptance of a Cingalese translation upon palm leaves of one of your sacred dramas.[2]

"Tamul and Cingalese translations of your Life of St. Paul and of all your sacred dramas will soon be finished, and copies of them upon paper and upon palm-leaves will be circulated by my directions amongst the Tamul and Cingalese inhabitants of that island.

"The constant intercourse which I have had for sixteen years with the different classes of people in Ceylon, and the opportunities which my office of Chief Justice has afforded me of ascertaining with some degree of accuracy the effect which is likely to be produced in the country by works of this description, leave no doubt in my mind that the Life of St. Paul and the sacred dramas, from their being adapted to the capacity of the natives, will inevitably improve their religious and their moral feelings.

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[1] Correspondence of Bishop Jebb, vol. ii. p. 338, 339.

[2] Moses in the Bulrushes; now in the possession of R. Lovell Gwatkin, Esq.

"I have to offer many apologies to you for the liberty which I have taken in intruding so much upon your time; and I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect and esteem,

"Madam,

"Your most obedient humble Servant,

"ALEXANDER JOHNSTON."

This letter was followed up shortly after by a visit from Sir Alexander, when he took the opportunity of explaining to Mrs. More the mild and judicious measures by which he had effected the extinction of slavery in Ceylon. Having obtained for the native freemen, among other immunities, the privilege of sitting as jurors on trials, he asked in return the emancipation of all slave children born after the 12th August 1816, the anniversary of the Regent's birth-day: a concession cheerfully and gratefully made.[1] The proprietors also gave their slaves a holiday on the return of that day; and on such occasions it is customary in Ceylon to rejoice in choral and rudely dramatick celebrations. Sir Alexander therefore requested Mrs. More to write a little poem in this style, tending to improve the morals of the people, to be sung by the Cingalese at these meetings. Such was the origin of "The Feast of Freedom."

Sir Alexander had brought with him from Ceylon two young Teerunanxis, or high priests of the Buddhist persuasion, named Munhi Rat'hana and Dherma Rama, whom he committed to the

1 A detailed account of these measures will be found in the Asiatick Journal for June 1827, and in the Eleventh Report of the proceedings of the African Institution.

care and education of his friend Dr. Adam Clarke, the learned methodist, under whose roof they were boarded at the expense of the Wesleyan Society. They were persons of natural and highly cultivated abilities, one a physician and painter, and both elegant poets, acquainted with the Cingalese, Portuguese, Pali, Sanscrit, and Tamul languages. They became, by the Doctor's argument and instruction, confirmed in the truth of Christianity. They were among the visitors of Barley Wood, and, at the instance of Sir Alexander Johnston, translated "The Feast of Freedom" into the Cingalese. The following is part of a letter in which Sir Alexander gives his opinion of this little drama:—"The slaves of all the different castes in Ceylon will be quite proud and delighted to hear that they and their children have become an object of attention to the author of the 'Sacred Dramas.' Your verses will, I can assure you, have more influence than you can imagine in improving their religious and moral, as well as their political feelings; and every person who has any interest in the welfare of the inhabitants of that island must feel infinitely indebted to you for the philanthropy and condescension which you have shewn upon the occasion, in taking the trouble, notwithstanding the delicate state of your health, to compose a work which will be so gratifying and so instructive to a class of people, who, from the peculiarity of their situation, are the more sensible to such acts of kindness and humanity." "Lady Johnston and I, as well as my sons and daughters, have been

much interested since my return from Barley Wood by the perusal of your tracts and ballads, and we have already selected a great many of them for translation and circulation in Ceylon." In a letter written some years after, Sir Alexander says, "It is my intention to have translations of your poem made into *all the different languages which are most prevalent in Asia*, in order that the ideas of religion which it so beautifully connects with those of freedom may be inseparably associated in the minds and hearts of all those natives in India who may, either now or hereafter, participate in the benefits which must inevitably be derived to them from the adoption of those measures to which I have just alluded."[1] In a later letter on the same subject Sir Alexander says, "What a pleasure must it afford you, my dear Madam, to have the power of producing such moral improvement by your writings, not only throughout Europe, but throughout *Asia!* for I am convinced that your writings have had a greater effect, and have been more generally read, than any other works which have been written for the last 100 years."

"The Feast of Freedom" became, as Sir Alexander had anticipated, a great favourite in Ceylon. It was not intended for publication in England; but, copies having got into circulation, and it having been set to musick by the late eminent Charles Wesley, Mrs. More printed it,

[1] The privilege of natives to sit on juries, &c.

with a few trifles, in aid of Protestant education in Ireland.

About this time Mrs. More received a letter from Bishop Kempe, of Maryland, recounting the benefits which had resulted from the circulation of her books and tracts in America; when she observed to Mr. Gwatkin, who read it to her, "One ought to fall on one's knees for such a letter; first, to pray for humility; secondly, to have been permitted to be the weak instrument of good in the hands of the Almighty."

Increasing bodily infirmities, and frequent and dangerous accessions of illness, produced by the excitement of incessant society on an unhealthy constitution, had determined Mrs. More to attempt no other work of any importance; but the activity of her mind and the amplitude of her philanthropy sapped the resolution. She had long had it in contemplation to compose a treatise on prayer; which, whether regarded in itself as a duty and privilege, or in its effects on individuals and communities, could not, as she experimentally knew, be estimated too high. Having, however, already expressed herself on the subject in various parts of her writings, she thought she could better effect her purpose by digesting and arranging what she had already written, with a short supplement of what she had omitted, than by a treatise entirely new. While occupied in the supplementary part of her intended work, she found she had written so much additional matter, that she abandoned for the present her original intention, and determined,

instead, to fill the new volume with essays on other subjects. The publick prints, and the correspondence and conversation of distinguished friends, daily confirmed what her own sagacity had presaged, that peace with France would not be without dangers to Britain—dangers in no way inferior to those of war. While engaged in the contest, one feeling, devotion to England and all that was English, pervaded all classes; and as the war was directed against a people who had expressly renounced their God, the bond of patriotism was cemented by zeal in defence of that Bible and that Church for which it was felt they were contending. But peace, in removing the national enmity, and obliterating some honest prejudices, had substituted prepossessions neither honest nor innocuous. A general rush to the newly opened continent ensued; the vices and dissipations of the French capital were in course of importation with alarming speed. The Seine, to use the image of the Roman satirist[1], was flowing into the Thames; and the Sabbath, that great citadel of religion, which national peril and religious patriotism, not to mention the influence of Mrs. More and other Christian writers, had caused to be far more seriously observed than when she first called the attention of her countrymen to the subject, was now in danger of more daring desecration than any that had been hitherto ventured

[1] "Jampridem Syrus in Tiberim defluxit Orontes."
Juv. Sat. iii. 62.

on by any class of society. The restraints of decency, acknowledged by those who bowed to none higher, were giving way before the spectacle of a Parisian Sabbath, where the thoughtless and ignorant deemed themselves excusable in following what was only in their view the custom of the country; alleging that, though they would not for the world devote an English Sunday to riot and dissipation, yet, in Paris, matters were quite different; deeming, like the Syrians, that the God of Israel was God of the hills, but not of the valleys[1]; God in England, but not in France; and almost setting their seal to the awfully impious act whereby the blasphemers of France affected to exclude their Creator from that portion of his world. Such characters, as might be expected, did not long care to observe their foolish and hypocritical distinction; and the reverence which, in Protestant England, had fenced this holiest day, was proportionally invaded. This disparagement of great Christian obligations, and the cessation of all necessity for protecting the Church against foreign aggression, weakened the attachment of the less enlightened to their spiritual Mother; and many relapsed into a practical infidelity, while others were "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."[2] Under the name of "New Seceders," several persons, and among

[1] See 1 Kings, xx. 28. [2] Eph. iv. 14.

them some clergymen in the west of England, had separated from the Church, without the smallest bond of union among themselves except bitter and inexorable hostility against the church they had left; deprecating, indeed, all unity, except for aggressive purposes, "*because Christ had told his disciples he came not to send peace on earth, but a sword.*"! Calvinism combined with Sabellianism; the assertion of liberty to change their religious sentiments every month; the rejection of all creeds and communions but their own fancies; these were some of the rights of conscience claimed by these spiritual Ishmaelites.[1] They were of the sort described by the Apostle, "they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."[2] Such a state of things Mrs. More could not behold without making some effort to neutralize the mischief. She had noted down her thoughts, as they arose, on the temper of the times, and from these she resolved to draw the materials of her new volume. Having arranged them in the form of twelve short papers or essays, she intituled them "Moral Sketches of prevailing Opinions and Manners, Foreign and Domestick."

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[1] "You will have grieved at the wild schism of Baring, and Snow and Co. In all ages of the Church the first seed of heresy I take to have been *vanity*. When I lamented the secession of these men to the Bishop of St. David's, (Burgess,) his answer was, 'You ought to rejoice to get such doctrines out of the Church at any rate. Their scheme will come to nothing.'"—*Letter of Mrs. More to the Rev. R. C. Whalley.*

[2] 2 Tim. iii. 6, 7.

"I shall create more enemies by it," she observed in conversation, "than by any former publication. But I cannot help it. As the Prophet says, 'I have delivered my own soul.'" To the "Moral Sketches" she appended her "Reflections on Prayer;" and the volume issued from the press in the middle of the year 1819. It attained the number of eleven editions; the first of which was sold on the day of publication, and realised 3,000*l.* 10,000 copies have been printed.

It appears from Mrs. More's correspondence with Messrs. Cadell and Davies, that those gentlemen wished her to follow up this work by an improvement of Gibbon's hint to Miss Holroyd,—that, although women commonly read more than men, yet, for want of a plan, a method, a fixed object, their reading was commonly of little use to themselves or others.[1] Gibbon, on this occasion, offered, if Miss Holroyd would inform him what department of reading she preferred, to advise and assist her. What was the result of the offer is not known; but it occurred to Mrs. Davies that Mrs. More might do for her sex at large what Mr. Gibbon proposed to do for Miss Holroyd,—direct them in the choice and order of books in various departments of useful and ornamental literature. The idea was felicitous, nor less so the selection of her who was to teach it; for, unquestionably, none could have been found abler to execute it than Mrs. More. But it is probable that

[1] See Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works, 4to. vol. i. p. 259.

Mrs. More had now determined to close her literary labours. In the preface to the "Moral Sketches" she had taken her "*final* leave of her readers;" and though her sister and friends importuned her to cancel the fatal word, she could not be prevailed on to do it. A fifth edition of the "Hints to a Princess" being now called for, she added, at the request of her publishers, a new preface, containing observations on the lamented person for whose use the work was originally designed. It was her comfort on this occasion to be assured by the widowed consort that he had been deeply affected by it, and was very grateful for it.

Not many weeks after the publication of the "Moral Sketches," Mrs. More sustained the heaviest loss she had been called on to encounter, that of her only remaining sister, who expired on the 14th of September. She had been long declining, and had suffered severely from pains in the head. For some years she had been unable to lead the family devotions; but a week before her death her health was so much improved, that she said to Hannah, "I am the better of the two now, and I *will* read prayers." On the Sunday previous to her death, she read the sermon to the family, when she strikingly selected one with the text, Ps. xxxi. 5., "Into thine hands I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." Four days only before her death, she was seized with acute inflammation of the liver. On the day of her seizure she had been well enough to visit, in company with Mr. Wilberforce and his family, then

staying in the house, several of the more interesting scenes in the neighbourhood. "Patty sat up with me," says he, in his diary, "till near twelve, talking over Hannah's first introduction to a London life: and I, not she, broke off the conference. I never saw her more animated."[1] She afterwards went to Hannah in bed, and took part in a short conversation with her. About an hour after, the afflicted Hannah was called to the bedside of this beloved relative, to witness her dying anguish, which was most acute. Notwithstanding, however, her corporeal trial, her mind was joyful and hopeful. During the whole of her brief illness, she expressed repeatedly and emphatically her utter distrust of herself, and her entire reliance on her Saviour. She would then exclaim, "The Lord is my light and my salvation! whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life! of whom shall I be afraid?" When a friend said, "Your sufferings are very great," she replied, "Oh, I love my sufferings! they come from God, and I love whatever comes from him." When delirium supervened, her religious expressions scarcely seemed to wander; once when Hannah asked if she knew her, she said "O, yes! you are *Christian Morals.*" She was continually directing, in her mental wanderings, the distribution of clothing and alms. Charity and self-denial had always been her distinguishing qualities; and she had even closely curtailed the expenses of dress

[1] Life of Wilberforce, vol. v. p. 32.

that she might increase her means of beneficence. Besides her private charities, which were great, she had been, indeed, the almoner of the family. She managed the practical part of the clubs and schools, and generally read the sermon at the evening meetings. "I know no one (writes one who knew her well) who ever went so much out of *self* to promote the ease and enjoyment, not only of her friends, but of every individual." At her funeral, the church and churchyard were crowded with poor, who had partaken of her benefactions, from parishes miles round; and, on the Sunday after, two funeral sermons were preached in Wrington church, one by the Rev. Wm. Leeves, the rector, and the other by his son, the Rev. Henry Leeves. Her admiration of Hannah, even from early years, was unbounded; and to the success and celebrity of this gifted sister she was always ready to make any sacrifice; and cheerfully laid at her feet the credit of whatever resulted from her own co-operation. To her affectionate attentions in sickness the world is undoubtedly indebted, under Providence, for the prolongation of Hannah's life, which must otherwise have sunk beneath the pressure of disease, calumny, and mental exhaustion. Her conversation was eminently calculated to refute the too prevalent opinion which confounds seriousness with gloom. Always sensible, it was always lively, and not unfrequently humorous; and, by its gaiety and benevolence, frequently made way against prejudice, and conciliated opponents, where the graver

and more argumentative discourse of Hannah might have been exerted in vain. She was neither politician nor controversialist; but was ardently attached to the King, and to the Constitution in Church and State; though her principles, as a churchwoman, were, perhaps, rather to be expressed by a mere attachment to the doctrine and preference of the discipline of the church—a preference, sincere indeed, and cordial—than by any very clear views on the subject of apostolical order and church unity. The sound, sober, and living Christianity taught by the Church of England was, however, her creed; and well did she adorn and exemplify its excellence. One who well knew her, and who imparted the intelligence of her decease to Mr. Gwatkin, wrote, "Her life has been from her youth *practical Christianity;* she died as she lived."

A letter written only one week before her fatal seizure, and when, though undoubtedly believing her departure not distant, she probably anticipated so early a summons as little as the youngest and healthiest reader of this, is at once illustrative and characteristick, and can scarcely prove uninteresting. Her honest warmth, colloquial plainness, rich enjoyment of temporal blessings, deep and solemn contemplation of eternity, overflowing love for all, and pious readiness for her change, are all boldly and clearly brought out in the following extracts. She is writing to Mr. Gwatkin.

"Well! I am glad we have met once more in this world, and met without alloy of any affection on

either side! May we all be growing in grace, and our minds spiritually improving, and our hearts rapidly renewing! O dear, what a minute is this world to make a fuss about! yet it is a beautiful world to look upon. * * * *

"My dearest Ann[1] will not quite forgive me, if I do not say a few words; they must be few; but they shall be sweet: to tell you that I love you all dearly—so dearly as to care for the immortal part, and to pray and wish that the Spirit of divine love may fill your hearts, strengthen your faith, and lay you all safely at the foot of the cross. God bless and keep you!

"Harriet is included."

Martha More had always enjoyed Hannah's closest intimacy; and, as the little circle of the domestick charities gradually contracted, she became, as it were, heir to the affections of the departed, till, at last, she might be regarded as occupying in her sister's heart not only her own place, but those of all the others. She was, indeed, to her what none other could be. "She was," says Mrs. More, in a letter to Mr. Jebb and the Rev. Charles Forster, "not only my comfort and my counsel, but eyes and hands and feet to me. Of the daily cares of life I knew nothing; and they are come upon me when I am least able to bear them." In this loss, Mrs. More first knew the loneliness of age. Indeed, she said she now felt ten years older. She experienced, however, at the same time, the sufficiency of that support

[1] Miss Gwatkin.

on which she had ever relied, and the value of that treasure which she had accumulated for the day when the resources of earth should fail. When she had witnessed the last moments of this beloved relative, she said solemnly, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord;" and quietly withdrew. Nor was earthly solace wanting. More than a hundred letters, full of condolence, and consolation, and affection, were addressed to her within five weeks of the fatal event. For these refreshments she was duly grateful, and repeatedly said, "Mine is *simple* sorrow, unmixed with any painful regrets; but 'I must finish my journey alone.'[1]" In a letter to Mr. Jebb and Mr. Forster she thus expresses her feelings: "Accept my cordial thanks, my kind sympathizing friends, for your pious condolence; it has given comfort to an oppressed heart. I have, indeed, blessed be Almighty goodness! experienced something of those divine consolations, which I have found to be neither few nor small. I do sorrow; but I trust I sorrow not as those who have no hope; for I firmly believe that those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. Her exemplary life and her edifying death are, indeed, matter of great gratitude; yet it acts two ways. The more valuable she was in life, the more acute are the feelings excited by her loss. But all is in His hands who does always all things well. I endeavour to keep my mercies before my

[1] Cowper's Alexander Selkirk.

eyes; viz. that she was spared to me so long; that her last sufferings, though exquisite, were short; above all, that she is spared feeling for me what I have felt and still feel for her." Writing to Mr. Gwatkin, Mrs. More says, "My merciful Father is indeed very gracious to me under very trying circumstances. He has enabled me to see his goodness in removing my chief earthly comfort. He has taken her from a world of sorrow and sin to a world of rest, and peace, and happiness; and, by thus removing my principal human support, he intended to lead me to depend more entirely on Himself. It is my wish and prayer that I may not entirely frustrate his great design. Her death was as edifying as her life had been exemplary. I may indeed say, 'the house is left unto me desolate,' but I take comfort in the thought that the remainder of my pilgrimage must necessarily be short. May my latter end be like hers!" The prayer was fully heard; the resolution faithfully kept. The withdrawal of the objects of our affection, or the discovery of their unworthiness, is a frequent exercise by which we are taught the triumphant exultation, "I am not alone, because the Father is with me."[1] He who was "made perfect through sufferings"[2] experienced this desolation and this support; and Hannah More, mature in grace, was now called on for this additional proof of her stedfastness in faith, and complete reliance on her loving though chastening Father.

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[1] John xvi. [2] Hebr.

The proof was afforded. "If it be possible her character can rise higher," said a friend who stayed with her soon after, "it does under this heaviest of trials. She is now fully exemplifying 'Practical Piety.'"[1] From this time she devoted herself more exclusively to religious study and contemplation; although, as will be seen, not having entirely renounced her pen, and still pursued by throngs who sought instruction or gratification at her lips, or possessed the privilege of her intimacy.

[1] In the letter in which this remark occurs, we have the following characteristick passage: "She (Hannah) has now many duties to fulfil which dear Mrs. Patty undertook, and in which she took delight. She loved *management*; the cares of the house and of the schools were hers; all this devolves on Mrs. Hannah. *Persons who do not know her as well as we do, exclaim, 'What will she do?' In reply, I say she can do any thing she pleases. After Mrs. Sally's death, it was supposed the garden would be neglected; but she immediately undertook it, and there was no deficiency of flowers.*"

LOCKE'S URN, BARLEY WOOD.

He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days. *Ps.* cii. 23.

Pray without ceasing. 1 *Thess.* v. 17.

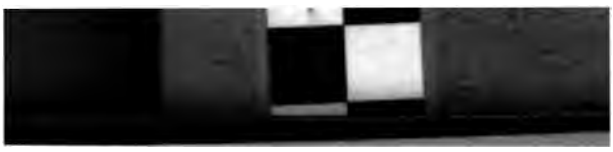
CHAPTER IX.

THE popular tumults which had distracted the country in 1816-17, had been renewed in the present year with aggravated violence, and were evidently the result of a combination, extensive, formidable, and skilfully organized. This conspiracy had now existed at least eight years in the country, and was making progress; and not the least untoward circumstance attending it was its

identity in all its features with the early stages of the French revolution. The visionary Spencean, who was to regenerate society by a community of lands and goods; the furious ultra-republican, who warred with all government but such as he should make for himself; the reckless plunderer, whose cause was nothing but his own personal enrichment; the assassin, whose element was blood; and the infidel, madly opposing the Providence which he affected to deny, presented a complete counterpart to the Girondist, Jacobin, *Philosophe*, and the various shades and sections, distinct or blended, which characterized the antichristian and antisocial conspiracy in France. Their clubs and correspondences; their nocturnal drillings and trainings; their systematick attacks on the Bible and the Church; the labour, and even the expense, which they incurred in writing, printing, and disseminating their pernicious doctrines; their attempts to corrupt the whole body of domestick servants, and even the soldiery; and, especially, the organization of large tumultuous bodies of ferocious unsexed women, presented an appalling parallel to the preliminary phenomena of the great revolutionary tornado in the neighbouring country. At Birmingham, which then returned no representatives to Parliament, a person was seditiously elected by a large meeting to sustain that character under the title of "legislative attorney;" and at Manchester a disaffected assembly seemed to threaten destruction to the town; a consummation, probably, only averted by the prompt interference

of the local military. Though, on this occasion, hundreds of lives were, probably, preserved, a few, unhappily, were lost: and the disturbers of publick order wanted not address to turn this circumstance to account, and represent it as a violent and flagitious invasion of the liberty and safety of the people. On recovering from the first shock of her irreparable loss, this position of the country was the first external object which met the eye of Mrs. More. Her mind was not sufficiently tranquillized and disengaged to permit her to resume her pen, and she had lost her keenest stimulus to composition, the approbation of her beloved sister, and the pleasure which her success always excited in that dearest of friends. When the news arrived at Barley Wood that a third edition of the "Moral Sketches" was demanded, she observed to a friend, "Had dear Patty been living, how animated would she have been on reading this letter! Now, how vapid it is! when she to whom it would have given so much pleasure is laid in her cold grave."[1] Still Mrs. More thought it her duty to do what she could; and she therefore collected into one pamphlet all her political tracts and ballads, with some adaptations, that they might find a more extended circulation among the classes whom they were written to benefit. Perhaps, in imposing on herself this labour, she had in contemplation also the state of her own mind, too ready to

[1] Private Letter of a friend of Mrs. More to R. Lovell Gwatkin, Esq.



indulge in meditations on her recent bereavement, and hence, as she might apprehend, to despond and repine.

It is unquestionable, that, by extraordinary mental exertions, undertaken, apparently, in part with this view, she had been able to bear up in a remarkable degree against severe privations, a feeble frame, and the infirmities of advancing age. In the last six years she had lost all her four sisters; and during that time she had written two works evincing much observation and reflection on what was going on around her. That a republication, and not a composition, was her resort in the present instance, is a proof at once that her "spirit" was still "willing," and that "the flesh" was now "weak." It was impossible, with all her struggles and all her consolations, that a heart so deeply and repeatedly wounded should transmit no infirmity to a drooping and enfeebled body. She struggled through the year to maintain the conflict; but, in the spring of the following year, (1820) she found herself obliged to keep her chamber by successive attacks of disease. During one of these, Mr. Cadell wrote to her to announce that a new edition of her "Moral Sketches" was called for; and to request a prefatory notice of George III., who had recently died. Though in a state of high fever, she contrived to elude the vigilance of her friends, and, having secreted her writing materials in her bed, she composed, in two mornings, the exquisite sketch of the character and times of that great and honoured prince

which stands as her preface to the sixth edition of her work. In the autumn, not having yet quitted her chamber, she was, in all appearance, about to join her glorified sisters in the presence of their Saviour. During the severe illness she then experienced, when herself and all around her were expecting her almost momentary dissolution, her language breathed the purest tranquillity, resignation, comfort, and faith, — the most perfect abandonment of all merit but her Saviour's, — and perpetual supplication for pardon and mercy. She now experienced the blessing which a holy life brings at the near approach of death, a blessing which she had often imagined and depicted, but which, perhaps, she had never before so distinctly realized.

From this illness, however, it pleased God again to raise her. On her recovery, she thus describes her feelings in a letter to her beloved friends, Mr. and Mrs. Gwatkin :—" My last attack was the severest conflict I ever had with death, and I have had many. Twice I appeared to be dead. I own, as the bitterness of death seemed to be past, I felt rather reluctant to be brought back to a world of suffering, sin, and sorrow. But I have been enabled to resign my will to that of Him who has in his hands the issues of life and death." Though thirteen years were added to her useful life, the returns of sickness were more severe and dangerous than in former times, and for the next five years she was almost constantly confined to her room.

In the following year (1821) she again turned her thoughts to composition. She had always distinguished with especial attention the daughter of one of her servants, and, indeed, the child had been no less a favourite with the sisters, particularly Martha. To amuse this child, she had often written what would be called nursery verses; and, as little Louisa now was advancing to an age when she would be more capable of receiving instruction in combination with amusement, Mrs. More raised the tone of these trifles; and once, as an useful exercise of memory, she cast into familiar verse the names and principal contents of the several books of the Bible. This her friends advised her to amplify and publish, as calculated to be generally serviceable. To this desire she acceded, though not without some reluctance. She wished, however, to publish anonymously, but did not object to claim the authorship. But this intention was ultimately overruled; and, in the early part of 1821, her little book appeared under the title of "Bible Rhymes on the Names of all the Books of the Old and New Testament, with Allusion to some of the principal Incidents and Characters."

Much censure has been cast on those who advised this publication, as derogatory to Mrs. More's literary character; but, perhaps, the "Bible Rhymes" have, by these criticks, been tried by a standard to which they never aspired. They were never intended to reach the dignity of a *poem;*

they rather resemble the little sketches of Ostervald and Trimmer, enlivened with the colouring of verse. Regarded in this light, they will not be found to detract from the reputation of the pen which drew "The Sunday School" and the "Tracts for Sunday reading."

Although the origin of "Bible Rhymes" was, as I am informed by an intimate friend of Mrs. More, such as has been above recorded, yet a letter to Mr. Gwatkin, in which Mrs More alludes to that book, says expressly, "It is not meant for children, but young persons, whose principles the infidels of the day have so assiduously endeavoured to corrupt." It was, doubtless, much enlarged and improved for this purpose, before it went to press.

During the composition of this little piece, and of the extensive enlargements which she made in the second edition, Mrs. More was in a state of great indisposition and debility; and, early in the year 1822, she was visited with another alarming attack of fever, which confined her to her bed for six months, and again gave opportunity for the exercise and display of that simple and quiet confidence and resignation which two years before had tested the efficacy of that Gospel in which she had stored all her hopes. Her demeanour at this time is thus described by one who had the opportunity of observing it. "With a mind untouched amidst the havock of an intense and unsubduable fever, and invariably calm, and placid, and composed, under the irritation of a violent inflamma-

tory complaint, the attendants upon her sick bed have witnessed in this highly favoured servant of her Lord and Master such a display of the goodness of God, and the power of his holy religion on a truly regenerate heart, as would be sufficient to convert a world of unbelievers; and, I trust, has not been exhibited in vain to the impressive and affecting scene." Another friend, who was with her at the same period, writes: "In this illness, as on former occasions, the medical men confess that the meek patience, composure, and perfect serenity of her mind, afford to their remedies an advantage they very rarely possess. It is most edifying to witness the calm acquiescence, and filial trust and confidence, with which she places herself in the arms of her God and Saviour; and the few earthly things (if indeed they may be called earthly) which find any lodgment in her purified mind, are thoughts of anxiety for the spiritual improvement of all who have ever been objects of her attention." One more sketch of this date, from the bed-side of Hannah More, shall be offered to the reader. It is part of a letter to Mr. Gwatkin. "It is scarcely necessary to mention to you, who are so intimately acquainted with the constant equanimity of mind, and complete acquiescence in the will of her Almighty Father, of this eminent Christian, that all the words which drop from her lips (which are, alas! allowed to be but few) breathe nothing but holy love and peace; that every thing she utters is replete with instruction, and, I would

trust, edification, to the hearers; she is enabled, through grace, with a childlike confidence and plain-hearted faith, to throw herself at the foot of the Cross, and to exemplify, by her conduct, that "sanctified afflictions are indeed spiritual promotions."

On her recovery from this illness, Mrs. More was gratified by a curious piece of intelligence from America. Had her own celebrity alone been involved in this, she would, probably, have derived small pleasure from information which could no longer gladden the hearts nearest and dearest to her own; and she had lived too long, read and witnessed too much, and prayed too well, to retain more than the memory of

"That last infirmity of noble mind,[1]"

the thirst of earthly fame. But none could be less insensible than Hannah More to any evidence of her usefulness, or fruit of her diligence. In this she read the proofs of a reversionary renown, for which she indeed thirsted, and after which she strove; and greatly must she have rejoiced to learn that the very name of her abode was a spell that aroused benevolence in the Western world, to shed the light of the Gospel on the darkest isles of the East. A sketch of Barley Wood had found its way to *New York*, and engravings of it were on sale in that city, for the benefit of a mission school for girls, to be named *Barley Wood*,

[1] Milton's Lycidas.

in *Ceylon*. Perhaps the instance is unparalleled. The fame of a *British* female, won in the pure field of piety and beneficence, makes the representation of her residence an object of interest and desire *across the Atlantick*, while no name can be found more appropriate than that of her dwelling, to designate the abode of sublimest charity in *the opposite region of the globe*.

In 1824 Mrs. More was seized with so severe an accession of illness that her physician, ultimately, pronounced her recovery hopeless. It was from this vestibule of eternity, as it must have seemed to her, that she again determined to address the world. If it be a comfort to an author, in such an hour, to have written

"No line, which, dying, he would wish to blot,"

how enviable her feelings, who could wish, not merely not to blot, but to reiterate and diffuse what she had written! Her friends had often urged her to compose a treatise on prayer; but her general reply had been that her published writings already contained all that she had to say on the subject. Still, however, she had experienced so deeply the privileges of prayer, that she could not excuse herself from the task of commending it in some peculiar work. In the preface to her last she had declared her conviction "that there is no true virtue which is not founded in religion, and no true religion which is not maintained by prayer;" and under no circumstances could she inculcate this truth with more

impressive solemnity than now. Accordingly, she resumed the prosecution of the idea which, in 1819, had originated her "Reflections on Prayer." She made her friends read to her those portions of her former works which treated the subject, superintending the arrangement and combination of them herself in a succinct and harmonious form. This done, she dictated the affecting preface, beginning, "From a sick, and, in all human probability, a dying bed, the writer of these pages feels an earnest desire to be enabled, with the blessing of God, to execute a little plan which has at different times crossed her mind, but which she never found leisure to accomplish till the present season of incapacity." Not expecting to live till the printing was completed, she prefixed as a motto the appropriate text of St. Peter, "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, I will endeavour that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance."[1] The whole was then despatched to Mr. Cadell, and put to press immediately. *When it was published, she was given over.* Such was the origin of "The Spirit of Prayer;" an instance, unparalleled, perhaps, in literary history: a book composed on her death-bed (for it was virtually such) by a woman in her 80th year. It is impossible to peruse this work without a feeling akin to that which would accompany a communication from the world beyond the veil. It is impossible

[1] 2 Pet. i. 13, 14.

not to recognise some emanations of the heavenly shechinah in the page of one who had been so long gazing towards the sanctuary, and to whose eye some glimpses of the interior glory had then found their way. It must give incalculable emphasis to the truths contained in that little treatise, to think they were approved, stated, enjoined, as from a dying bed, by one who had made it the one great business of life to promulgate them; and it must inspire confidence in the general soundness of Mrs. More's writings, to reflect in what manner she regarded them at a moment when self-deceit abandons, commonly, the most self-deceiving.

The first edition of "The Spirit of Prayer" was sold while in the press, and the first three editions in as many months. It has gone through eleven editions, and 17,500 copies have been printed. It was immediately translated into French, and had a great circulation in Paris.

With this work Mrs. More's literary exertions appropriately closed. Indeed, Barley Wood had, by this time, become a place of such general resort, and letters from strangers as well as friends became so frequent, that she would have found it impracticable to attend to literary occupations, which, however, she had no wish to do, though the energy and brilliancy of her conversation sufficiently shewed that age had not diminished her capacity for the task. It is remarkable, indeed, that, in all her numerous and almost continuous fevers, she had never lost the possession of her mental faculties a moment. Although no longer

writing for the press, she maintained a very large religious correspondence, European and American. In particular, she found frequent occasion, with advancing age, to pen consolatory letters on the death of friends; a task to which she was well fitted by knowledge and experience, and in which, as might be expected, she eminently excelled. Indeed, she seems to have studiously examined every argument which would bear upon the subject, that she might preach to herself, who so much needed it, what she preached to others; shewing, by a living example, that Christianity, merely by its ordinary effects, produced what the great Gentile master of consolation could find no instance of among the greatest of his fellow heathens, *an afflicted comforter*.[1] A collection of these letters would be a valuable armoury of Christian argument for the day of tribulation. One of them, addressed to a lady on the death of her son, contains so just a delineation of the writer's mind, at this moment of her life, that it would be injustice to the subject to withhold it. "I have sometimes had occasion to observe that the very indulgence of excessive grief looks so like piety, as to lead us to mistake one for the other. Whereas, in truth, there is no state of the heart, no act of the life, so acceptable to our God and Saviour, as *unqualified resignation to the Divine dispensations*. I am per-

[1] Quùm omnia clarissimorum ingeniorum monumenta ad compescendos moderandosque luctus composita evolverem, non *inveniebam exemplum* ejus qui consolatus suos esset, quum ipse ab illis comploraretur."—*Seneca, de Cons. ad Helviam*, i.

suaded it will make part of the happiness of heaven to see the unfolding of the *cause* of those dispensations; to see the map of Providence laid open, and why it was necessary that we should suffer.

"*I do not write as one inexperienced on this melancholy subject. I have lost every dear sister; and, with one fever upon another, which has confined me to my room, and, in some measure, to my bed, for several years, I am left to 'finish my journey alone.'*"

Mrs. More was now, almost daily, called to a self-application of the lessons she taught, so numerous were her acquaintance, and so advanced her age. During the latter part of her residence at Barley Wood, she lost many of her earliest and most intimate friends, beside those already mentioned. Among the number were Mrs. Garrick; Sir W. W. Pepys (the Lælius of "The Bas Bleu"); Dr. Fisher, Bishop of Salisbury; Dr. Barrington, Bishop of Durham; Dr. Andrewes, Dean of Canterbury; and Lady Cremorne. It was remarked of Mrs. More that she never lost a friend but by death; and, as she continued to the last enlarging the number of this privileged order, she had, in her later years, and in her rural seclusion, less time at command than she had enjoyed at Hampton, when her evenings passed in the crowded saloons of the fashionable and the literary. To save her own time, as well as to accommodate her numerous visitors, she opened her house daily from twelve or one o'clock to three, for what she not inappropriately termed her "*levee.*" This

however, was far from securing the rest of her time for solitude, as friends from distant quarters were frequently besetting Barley Wood, and making importunate and irresistible demands on her leisure. Ingenious, however, to do good, she now employed herself in manufacturing little useful and ornamental articles, to be sold at fancy fairs for charitable purposes; the fact that they were the produce of her industry investing them with many times their intrinsick value. The same energy which distinguished her literary pursuits, was conspicuous in this humbler path of usefulness. On one occasion of this sort, she knitted so assiduously as to produce an abscess in her hand. Such, too, was her desire to be useful in as many ways as possible, that she frequently made devices of this kind to plead the cause of freedom and humanity. A favourite contribution was a drawing of a negro slave in a supplicating attitude, under which was written and signed by herself some short metrical appeal.[1] She did not, however,

[1] The following verses from her pen appear in "The Amulet" for 1828:—

"Time was, each lady thought no harm,
By ornaments she *wore*, to charm;
Self-love bad Industry make haste,
And Vanity was fed by Taste.
Oh then, the day's not distant far,
Up starts the bountiful bazaar!
Here Charity assumes new grace,
By wearing Decoration's face.
Long may the liberal scheme abide,
For Taste is Virtue so applied."

permit any intrusion on the concerns of her schools, which, reduced to three, Nailsea, Shipham, and Cheddar, still continued to flourish, containing about 600 children, under her auspices and the personal inspection of Miss Frowd,—the lady who, after the death of Martha More, had constantly resided with the bereaved survivor. Her clubs also continued to prosper, and the neighbouring gentry and clergy, as before, attended the anniversaries, at which Miss Frowd presided, and which produced their accustomed beneficial effects. In the year 1825 the clubs of the three parishes, Nailsea, Shipham, and Cheddar, had saved funds very nearly amounting to 2,000*l.*! Such is the result of an enlightened economy among the poorest classes. Perhaps all the merely temporal charities of Mrs. More never effected so much good as this instruction of the poor in the art of economising their own means. No amount of almsgiving could have made an approach to it. The parish of Shipham, especially, was benefited by its club, as the mining population, receiving large wages, but ruinously improvident, was exposed to occasional periods of the most grievous destitution, according as any unforeseen occurrence affected the value of calamine in the market. The distress of 1817 recurred at Shipham and Rowberrow in 1824 and 1825; and though the funds of the Female Club were only available in cases of sickness, there can be no doubt that the families of the members had acquired habits of prudence and frugality, which, at such a crisis, would manifest

their beneficial effects. Mrs. More had never confined her charities to a course which, though it might be *the best*, was not always the most applicable. She again interested the great and wealthy in favour of the distressed miners, and even sold out stock to give them 100*l.*

Thus passed, from Mrs. More's recovery in 1824, her busy and useful days, in storing and dispersing the best knowledge and the purest wisdom, in dispensing, with liberal hand, the temporal blessings with which her God had intrusted her, in instructing the ignorant and advising the inexperienced, in the sweet intercourse of Christian friendships, and the high communion of Christian devotion. Such, till the year 1828, was the dignified, rational, and pleasurable tenour of her every well-spent day. It was in that year that Canon Bowles thus pictured her, as he gave a poetical glance from Banwell Hill across the Vale of Wrington:

> "Accomplish'd, eloquent, and holy More,
> Who now, with slow and gentle decadence,
> In the same vale, with look uprais'd to heaven,
> Waits meekly at the gate of Paradise,
> Smiling at Time!"

But she was not permitted to await her translation to "the garden of the Lord" in a place which might seem so well suited to be its "gate." Circumstances which had never entered into her most distant calculations cruelly compelled her, in that year, to part for ever from a spot where she had expected to live in peace, and whence she had hoped to depart to glory.

MONUMENTAL TABLET IN WRINGTON CHURCH.

A man's foes shall be they of his own household. *Matt.* x. 36.

Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit; that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. *Rev.* xiv. 13.

CHAPTER X.

MRS. MORE was no stranger to the existence of ingratitude; and, considering the length of her life, the number of her benefactions, and the character of the world of which she was an inhabitant,

it is only strange that she met with so little. True to the divine definition, her charity thought no evil, — believed all things, — hoped all things; nor did she ever suspect a friend of insincerity, or one whom she had obliged of ingratitude, without evidence amounting to proof that the party was capable of such sentiments or conduct. Of the faithfulness of her own servants individually, and much more collectively, she never entertained the shadow of a suspicion. Indeed, a far less unsuspicious temper than hers might have trusted them with equal confidence. They had been taught the obligations of religion by all they heard and saw. They had been carefully trained in the knowledge and practice of Christian duty. Every night, for several years, Mrs. More made each of them repeat to her a text of Scripture. They had before them a perpetual example of every Christian grace and excellence; and every visitor to Barley Wood was one calculated to confirm them in the principles of religion, and, therefore, in those of the soundest and most cogent morality. Beside this most effective of motives, they were bound to Mrs. More's interests by a tie which none but the basest natures, however ignorant, disregard; she consulted their comfort and convenience with the kindest consideration; indeed, so strong was her opinion on the importance of *consideration*, and the defect of it commonly exhibited towards tradesmen and dependents, that she had purposed writing a treatise expressly on this subject. She might be really be

said to have called her domesticks not servants, but friends, and admitted them to her confidence and privacy. The daughter of one of them, for whose benefit, originally, the "Bible Rhymes" were written, was, from childhood, maintained in the house, and afterwards put to school, and apprenticed at Mrs. More's cost. There was, further, another bond, which even the vilest of humankind acknowledge, and with zeal proportioned to their vileness,— self-interest. Any discovered act of treachery would expel its perpetrator from beneath a roof which sheltered the circle of so many blessings, to be a vagabond and a fugitive. Mrs. More had, besides, bequeathed to each of her servants a handsome gratuity, of which they were aware, and this, of course, would be forfeited by unworthy conduct. Their duties were also engaged to their mistress by a very solemn and affecting circumstance. Mrs. Martha More, in her dying moments, forseeing the desolate position of her beloved sister, and her utter dependence on her servants, had earnestly admonished them to be "kind, attentive, and affectionate" to their only remaining mistress; and had then, in their hearing, offered up fervent prayers for them that they might have grace to be diligent and faithful. With so many motives,—the sacred, the generous, and the selfish, — concurring to protect her in this quarter, it was nothing wonderful that Mrs. More had no apprehensions from her household. Could it have been thought possible for *one* such instance of combined wickedness, ingratitude, and folly to

occur, it might well have been supposed that all the other domesticks would, with one voice, have indignantly exposed the offender, if on no other ground, at least to avoid suspicion of connivance. But that the whole establishment should combine to defraud and wrong systematically a benefactress whom religion, humanity, and selfishness at once commanded them to serve with affectionate fidelity, might well have seemed impossible, had not the fact attested the contrary. Alas for reliance on humankind! We lavish our love, our confidence, and all the dearest treasure of the heart in fertilizing the wilderness,— that it may bring forth thorns and thistles to us! But in these things no less legibly than in His own Scripture has God written the eternal sentence, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in man."[1]

For the three last years of Mrs. More's residence at Barley Wood, the most shameless peculation prevailed in the kitchen. Orders were issued to the tradesmen in her name, of which the servants reaped the benefit. Monies given for charity were appropriated by the servants. Presents of game to Mrs. More were intercepted in like manner. Suppers were given after the family had retired to bed. Intoxication was frequent. A person discharged from service for disreputable conduct, a relative of one of the servants, was actually harboured in the house for two months without Mrs. More's knowledge. These irregula-

[1] Ps. cxviii. 8.

rities were not altogether so secret as not to attract some notice; and Mrs. More was often pitied, if not blamed, by those who would talk of these facts to any but herself. Some of her friends had even adverted to the subject in her presence; but her confiding nature, and the improbability of the thing, would never permit her to countenance the charge. Emboldened by their success, the domesticks at last ventured to invite their friends to a nocturnal entertainment in a farm-house adjoining the premises of Barley Wood. When their mistress and Miss Frowd had gone to their chambers, the dramatis personæ of this new "High Life below Stairs" were to "*dress*," and steal away, (leaving, of course, the house unguarded,) and to return in time for the morning prayers. This was, however, somewhat too audacious; it transpired on the very day preceding the appointed night; and, as each hoped to gain by criminating the rest, the result was a complete exposure of the last three years' transactions. The discharge of this iniquitous household was, of course, resolved on; but there was a difference of opinion among Mrs. More's advisers as to the line eligible for her to take. Some recommended her to break up her establishment, and retire to Clifton. Some of her very oldest and most intimate friends represented that this could not be necessary, as it would scarcely be difficult to find successors who, with such inducements, would be honest. With this advice Mrs. More's inclinations accorded; but the majority of the friends about her thought otherwise, and

that, in her feeble state, there was no security for her while served by persons who could possibly fall under the influence of her former unworthy domesticks. These arguments prevailed with Mrs. More; and she resolved, in bitterness of heart, to sever from the cherished abode of seven-and-twenty years, and remove to Clifton.

During the interval which ensued between taking and executing this determination, the servants were not apprised of the course which Mrs. More's advisers had determined to take; which was, to remove her to Clifton as soon as practicable, giving them no notice of the day, but paying them, on the morning, a quarter's wages in advance. The plan was ripe for execution on the 18th of April. The Rev. Dr. Whalley, ever Mrs. More's steady and generous friend, allowed her to take immediate possession of his house at Clifton, and J. S. Harford, Esq., of Blaise Castle, sent his carriage to convey her. Incidents in themselves trivial are sometimes the reverse of unimportant when regarded as illustrative of temper and character. On this account, the little anecdote which follows will perhaps experience the indulgence of the reader, as evincing at once the buoyancy of spirits, gentleness of deportment, and benevolence, which never deserted Mrs. More in all her wrongs. On the morning of her intended departure, the servants, conjecturing the course to be pursued, tore off the mask of civility which they had worn while there was a hope of remaining. Her breakfast was laid without a table-cloth.

The daughter of her early friend Mrs. Simmons had come to assist and comfort her. To this lady Mrs. More said, "Mary, can you breakfast without a cloth?" "I desire to do what you do," was the reply. "Well," said Mrs. More, assuming some composure, "I will at least pluck up the courage to be mistress in my own house the last morning." She then called the servant, and asked her the meaning of the omission, who replied, with insolent carelessness, she thought it would do. Mrs. More then mildly said to the servant, "I'll thank you for a cloth," and took no further notice of this studied indignity.

When the hour was come when she was to step into the carriage which waited to convey her to Clifton, she descended the stairs which led from her apartment for the second time in seven years, and contemplated in silence, for a few minutes, the portraits of beloved friends which covered the walls of her dining room. She then took a sorrowing survey of her chosen abode, adorned by nature and art, and consecrated by numberless affectionate and solemn recollections. Many of the trees, now grown up into maturity, and verdant with the promise of the spring, had been planted with her own hand. She had observed to a friend some years before, "I consider this happy retreat a great blessing from the hand of heaven. Those things have taken deep root in this soil, but I must be careful lest I become too deeply rooted to earth. Let us keep our loins girded, our shoes on our feet, and our staff in our

hand, ready to depart."[1] It was, probably, in recollection of this sentiment, that she gave a brief but melancholy glance to her nurslings, and then, hurrying to the vehicle, observed to some friends who had come up to take their leave, "I am driven, like Eve, from Paradise; but not by angels."

The house at Clifton, (No. 4, Windsor Terrace,) which had been selected for her abode, commanded, from behind, a bold and varied prospect. The majestick descent of St. Vincent's Rocks in the foreground, and beyond, the rich budding verdure of Leigh Wood and the Nightingale Valley, with the Avon rolling through the broad chasm between, and proudly swelling beneath its burdens of commerce and pleasure, no sooner met the eye of Hannah More, than the scene awakened a beautiful and pious reflection. "I was always," she said, "delighted with fine scenery; but my sight, of late years, has been too dim to discern the distant beauties of the Vale of Wrington. It has pleased Providence to ordain me, in my last days, a view no less beautiful, all the features of which my eye can embrace."

In this state of calm acquiescence in the lot appointed her, her elastick mind soon recovered from its depression, and she was again able to hold intercourse with the social and intelligent. Her conversation had lost nothing of its brilliancy; her manner, nothing of its liveliness and intel-

[1] Memoranda of Mr. Gwatkin at Barley Wood.

lectual character. Like the great prophet of the elder covenant, her "eye was not dim, nor her natural force (in mind) abated." Such, however, was the multitude of visitors whom this more publick sojourn brought her, (nearly 400 in the first three weeks,) that she was obliged to restrict her "*levees*" to two days in the week only, while on the rest she was only accessible to her most intimate friends. In September 1828 she writes to Mr. Cadell: "I have sold my beautiful place, and find Clifton very pleasant. I have fewer cares, and more comfort." Her charities continued to flow, but, of course, no longer under her immediate inspection. The press she had abandoned; and correspondence, conversation, and study formed the business of her day.

On the death of her friend and landlord, Dr. Whalley, in the same year, his executor, the Rev. James A. Wickham, continued to shew the most assiduous attention to her comfort. Four years glided by in this happy combination of activity and rest, before the exertion of conversation became excessive, and she needed increased repose. "Her overworked mind," says a friend who had much intercourse with her at this period, "lost much of its wonted elasticity towards the close of life; but not a particle of that strength of affection, or that charity in its widest extent, and in the true meaning of the word, so powerfully inculcated by St. Paul." In the winter of 1832, after

another illness, the intellectual fabrick first shewed symptoms of decay, and loss of memory was succeeded by prostration of mental vigour. From this time, until September 1833, a slow fever perpetually preyed upon her strength. About a week before her death, she had lost all recollection of those about her. It was remarkable, however, that the intellectual and spiritual natures were distinctly discriminated throughout her illness. During this general aberration she prayed with consistency and fervour, though for short periods, and at distant intervals. Mr. J. S. Harford, in the obituary sketch which he wrote for the newspapers, says, "The writer of this tribute to her memory saw her only the day before her last seizure, when she expressed to him, in a most impressive manner, the sentiments of an humble and penitent believer in Jesus Christ, assuring him that she reposed her hopes of salvation on his merits alone, and expressing at the same time a firm and joyful affiance on his unchangeable promises." Mr. Harford informs me that, in all her lucid moments, love was no less conspicuous than faith. When she could not speak, she took his hand and pressed it to her lips. Her deportment at this time exhibited no inconsistencies or contradictions. It was as edifying as her exhausted state of mind and body would allow. Still it is not in the actual death-bed of Hannah More that the moral of her life is to be read. The illnesses of 1820, 1822, and 1824, were, in this sense, her death-bed, when

GRAVE OF MRS. HANNAH MORE, WRINGTON CHURCHYARD.

the healthy vigour of her mind enabled her to discover to others in all their beauty those inward consolations and hopes which she then so fully experienced, and the solidity of those principles which could so well sustain her in the most solemn crisis of our being.

On the 7th of September 1833, the pious and benevolent spirit of Hannah More gently, and almost imperceptibly, passed the barrier of time. On the 13th, her remains were brought to the family vault at Wrington. She had always expressed a wish that her funeral might be private; and the parties who had the management of the arrangements were strictly careful to fulfil her desire. Great numbers, however, feeling differently, and thinking no offence offered to the dead by a willing tribute of heartfelt respect, joined, in deep mourning, the funeral train; while still greater, who had intended this homage to the memory of her whose goodness all loved and many had experienced, were disappointed; for an express reached Wrington on the morning of the funeral to announce that it would arrive an hour and a half earlier than had been at first arranged; and there was no time to make the alteration extensively known. As the mournful procession passed through Bristol, all the shops were closed, and the bells of all the churches tolled; on its arrival at Barley Wood, it was joined by a large body of the neighbouring clergy, gentry, and yeomanry, accompanied by the children of the

Wrington national schools, who, on arriving at the churchyard, lined the pathway to the door. It was an affectingly appropriate spectacle, to behold the infant poor mingling with the great and the titled, to do the last mournful honour to their common benefactress; the tracts of "The Cheap Repository" being no less familiar to these children than the "Thoughts on the Manners of the Great" were to their aristocratick fellow mourners. The Rev. Thomas Tregenna Biddulph, Rector of St. James's, Bristol, commended the dust of Hannah More to the grave. Between a yew and a willow, a plain stone, with an inscription of equal plainness, marks the spot where the five good sisters sleep together in Christ. It is headed—

BENEATH ARE DEPOSITED THE MORTAL
REMAINS OF FIVE SISTERS.

Then follow their names, and the dates of their deaths; immediately after which succeeds,—

THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH,
ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED.
HEB. CH. 11. V. 13.
EPHES. CH. 1. V. 6.

Mrs. More and her sisters had accumulated by their industry handsome competencies; by her pen alone she had realized 30,000*l.* In part of Martha's property she had only a life interest—the rest devolved to her at the deaths of her respective

sisters. Much of her property was bequeathed to publick institutions. The following statement is copied by her executor from her will :—

IN CONSOLS.

Kildare Place Society, 200*l.*
Bristol Infirmary, 1000*l.*
Anti-slavery, 500*l.*
London Poor Pious Clergy, 500*l.*
London Clerical Education, 100*l.*
Moravian Missions at Cape of Good Hope, 200*l.*
Welsh College, 400*l.*
Bristol Clerical Education, 100*l.*
Hibernian Society, 200*l.*
Reformation Society, 200*l.*
Irish Religious Tract Society, 150*l.*
Irish Scripture Readers, 150*l.*
Burman Mission, 200*l.*
Conversion of Jews, 200*l.*
Printing Scriptures at Serampore, 100*l.*
Baptist Missionary, 100*l.*
London Seamen's Bible Society, 100*l.*
Bristol Seamen's Bible Society, 100*l.*
Liverpool Seamen's Bible Society, 100*l.*
London Missionary Society, 100*l.*
Printing Hebrew Scriptures, 100*l.*
British and Foreign Bible Society, 1000*l.*

STERLING.

Church Missionary Society, 1000*l.*
Educating Clergymen's Daughters' Society, 200*l.*
Diocese of Ohio, 200*l.*
Mangotsfield Church, 150*l.*
Bristol Stranger's Friend, 100*l.*
Bristol Small Debts, 100*l.*
Bristol Penitentiary, 100*l.*
Bristol Orphan Asylum, 100*l.*
Bristol Philosophical Institution, 100*l.*
London Stranger's Friend, 100*l.*
Barley Wood School, Ceylon, 100*l.*
Newfoundland Schools, 100*l.*
Distressed Vaudois, 100*l.*
Clifton Dispensary, 100*l.*
Bristol Visiting Poor, 100*l.*
Irish Society, 100*l.*
Sailors' Home, 100*l.*
Christian Knowledge Society, 50*l.*
Bristol Misericordia, 50*l.*
Bristol Samaritan, 50*l.*
Bristol Temple Infant School, 50*l.*
Prayer Book and Homily Society, 50*l.*
London Lock Hospital, 50*l.*
London Refuge for Destitute, 50*l.*

Gaelic Schools, 50*l.*
Female Schools in India, 50*l.*
Keynsham School, 50*l.*
Cheddar School, 50*l.*
Books for Ohio, 50*l.*
Bristol and Clifton Anti-slavery Society, 50*l.*
Clifton Lying-in Charity, 50*l.*
Clifton Infant School, 50*l.*
Clifton National School, 50*l.*
Clifton Female Hibernian, 50*l.*
Temple Poor, 50*l.*
Pews in Temple Church, 50*l.*
Bristol Harmonia, 20*l.*
Edinburgh Sabbath Schools, 20*l.*
Shipham Female Club, 50*l.*
Cheddar Female Club, 20*l.*
Poor Printers' Fund, 20*l.*
Monitors at Schools, 10*s.* each.
Shipham Poor, 50*l.*
Wrington Poor, 20*l.*
Cheddar Poor, 20*l.*
Nailsea Poor, 5*l.*
Pensioners at Wrington, 1*l.* each.
Miss Roberts' School, 30*l.*
Kildare Place Society, in addition, 100*l.*

The residue of the property was to be invested in the 3 per cent. consols, to augment the endowment of the new church of St. Philip and Jacob in Bristol. The out-parish of that name, till the year 1831, was without a church, although it had a population of 16,000 souls. In that year a church was erected, partly by voluntary subscription, and partly by a grant from the Church Building Commissioners, the ground being given by the corporation of Bristol. The church contains 1,500 free sittings. To this church the friends of Hannah More resolved, by the spell of her name, to add a school also; so that she, "being dead, might yet speak," not only in her imperishable writings, but by the living voice of the teacher of the poor, and her name and memory might carry on in Bristol the work which her goodness originated, and her prudence effected, in Cheddar, forty years before. Accordingly, at a meeting

which took place at Clifton, on the 10th of October 1833, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted: — "That the distinguished talents and qualifications of the late Mrs. Hannah More, consecrated most usefully and efficiently, throughout the course of a long life, to the noblest ends of Christian benevolence, have justly embalmed her memory in the publick esteem and veneration.—That this meeting is of opinion, it is desirable to convey to posterity some publick memorial of the sentiments embodied in the preceding resolution.—That a subscription be entered into for placing a tablet to the memory of Mrs. Hannah More in the parish church of Wrington, where her own remains and those of her four sisters are interred; and should the sum collected exceed what may be deemed necessary for the proper execution of such a purpose, that the surplus be devoted to the establishment of a school, (to bear her name,) in connection with the new church in the parish of St. Philip and Jacob in Bristol, towards the endowment of which she has bequeathed the residue of her estate." The contributors to this fund were numerous; upwards of 400*l.*[1] remained after erecting the tablet, which cost 120*l.*, and which, executed by Thomas Baily, esq. R.A., a native of Bristol, is represented in the vignette at the head of this chapter. It bears the following inscription: —

[1] The subscription has been since tripled.

SACRED

TO THE MEMORY OF

HANNAH MORE,

SHE WAS BORN IN THE PARISH OF STAPLETON, NEAR BRISTOL, A.D. 1745,
AND DIED AT CLIFTON, SEPTEMBER 7TH, A.D. 1833.

ENDOWED WITH GREAT INTELLECTUAL POWERS,
AND EARLY DISTINGUISHED BY THE SUCCESS
OF HER LITERARY LABOURS,
SHE ENTERED THE WORLD UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES
TENDING TO FIX HER AFFECTIONS ON ITS VANITIES;
BUT, INSTRUCTED IN THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST
TO FORM A JUST ESTIMATE OF THE REAL END OF HUMAN EXISTENCE,
SHE CHOSE THE BETTER PART,
AND CONSECRATED HER TIME AND TALENTS
TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE GOOD OF HER FELLOW CREATURES,
IN A LIFE OF PRACTICAL PIETY AND DIFFUSIVE BENEFICENCE.

HER NUMEROUS WRITINGS IN SUPPORT OF RELIGION AND ORDER,
AT A CRISIS WHEN BOTH WERE RUDELY ASSAILED,
WERE EQUALLY EDIFYING TO READERS OF ALL CLASSES,
AT ONCE DELIGHTING THE WISE
AND INSTRUCTING THE IGNORANT AND SIMPLE.

IN THE EIGHTY-NINTH YEAR OF HER AGE,
BELOVED BY HER FRIENDS, AND VENERATED BY THE PUBLIC,
SHE CLOSED HER CAREER OF USEFULNESS,
IN HUMBLE RELIANCE ON THE MERCIES OF GOD,
THROUGH FAITH IN THE MERITS OF HER REDEEMER.

HER MORTAL REMAINS ARE DEPOSITED IN A VAULT IN THIS
CHURCHYARD, WHICH ALSO CONTAINS THOSE OF HER FOUR SISTERS,
WHO RESIDED WITH HER AT BARLEY WOOD, IN THIS PARISH, HER
FAVOURITE ABODE, AND WHO ACTIVELY COOPERATED IN HER UNWEARIED
ACTS OF CHRISTIAN BENEVOLENCE.

MARY MORE DIED 18TH APRIL, 1813, AGED 75 YEARS.
ELIZABETH MORE DIED 16TH JUNE, 1816, AGED 76 YEARS.
SARAH MORE DIED 17TH MAY, 1817, AGED 74 YEARS.
MARTHA MORE DIED 16TH SEPTEMBER, 1819, AGED 60 YEARS.

THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED OUT OF A SUBSCRIPTION
FOR A PUBLIC MEMORIAL TO HANNAH MORE,
OF WHICH THE GREATER PART IS DEVOTED TO THE ERECTION OF A SCHOOL
IN THE POPULOUS AND DESTITUTE OUT-PARISH OF ST. PHILIP AND JACOB, BRISTOL,

TO THE BETTER ENDOWMENT OF WHOSE DISTRICT CHURCH
SHE BEQUEATHED THE RESIDUE OF HER PROPERTY.

It may naturally be expected that this volume should not conclude without a brief summary of Mrs. More's opinions and character, which I shall endeavour to trace as concisely as possible. In her letter to Bishop Beadon, as we have seen, she refers for her "full and undisguised view of the leading doctrines of Christianity" to the twentieth chapter of her Strictures on Female Education. She there lays the foundation of religious belief in the doctrine of the inherent corruption of human nature, without, however, any unprofitable speculations on the extent of this corruption in each individual: hence she logically deduces the necessity of a redemption in every instance, and states perspicuously and scripturally the great doctrine of an universal redemption. The necessity of a renewed heart and a holy life, the influence of the Holy Spirit to produce these effects, and the counteracting agency of a spiritual enemy, are next asserted; faith and works are represented as cause and effect[1], and a censure passed upon those religionists who exclude either from the Christian system. "I take my stand," said she to a friend, "upon these two texts: 'Without faith it is impossible to please God[2];' and, 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.'[3] To be saved as revealed by God, but to work as if their own exertions were to save them. 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, FOR it is

[1] On the subject of Mrs. More's views on this point, see the account of Mr. Daubeny's Letter, chap. vi.

[2] Heb. xi. 6. [3] Heb. xii. 14.

God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure.'[1] I believe in justification, but I believe in no justifying faith that is not a sanctifying faith."[2] With these views Mrs. More was fully qualified to be a member of the Church of England. And such she was. Her statements on this subject are nowhere ambiguous. In the letter to Bishop Beadon she speaks explicitly, "My attachment to the Established Church is, and ever has been, *entire, cordial, inviolable*, and, until now, *unquestioned. Its* DOCTRINE *and* DISCIPLINE *I* EQUALLY *approve.*" In her Essay on the Religion of the Fashionable World, she says, "*Most sincerely* attached to the Establishment myself, *not, as far as I am able to judge, from prejudice, but from* A FIXED AND SETTLED CONVICTION, I regard its institutions with a veneration at once affectionate and rational. Never need a Christian, except where his own heart is strangely indisposed, fail to derive benefit from its ordinances; and he may bless the overruling Providence of God that, in this instance, the natural variableness and inconsistency of human opinion is, as it were, fixed and settled, and hedged in by a stated service, so pure, so evangelical, and which is enriched by such a large infusion of Sacred Scripture. Perhaps there has not been since the age of the apostles a church upon earth in which the publick worship was so solemn and so cheerful; so simple, yet so sublime; so full of fervour, at the same time so free from enthusiasm; so rich in the gold of Christian antiquity, yet so

[1] Phil. ii. 12, 13. [2] Mr. Gwatkin's Memoranda.

astonishingly exempt from its dross. That it has imperfections we do not deny; but what are they compared with its general excellence? They are as the spots on the sun's disk, which a sharp observer may detect, but which neither diminish the warmth nor obscure the brightness."[1] "Our church occupies a kind of middle place; neither multiplying ceremonies nor affecting pompousness of publick worship with the Lutheran church, nor rejecting all ceremonies and all liturgical solemnity with the church of Geneva; a temperament thus singular, adopted and adhered to in times of unadvanced light and much polemical dissonance, amid jarring interests and political intrigues, conveys the idea of SOMETHING MORE EXCELLENT THAN COULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED FROM MERE HUMAN WISDOM."[2] The "Candidus" of "Christian Morals," (Mrs. More's abstraction of Christian perfection, though probably Mr. Wilberforce supplied the more prominent lineaments,) may here be taken as a fair exhibition of her own sentiments. "The more he examines Scripture (and he is habitually examining it) the more he is persuaded that the principles of his church are IDENTICAL WITH THE WORD OF GOD." "Satisfied that it is THE BEST OF ALL THE CHURCHES WHICH EXIST, he never troubles himself to inquire if it be the best that is possible. In the Church of England he is contented with EXCEL-

[1] Works, vol. xi. pp. 69, 70.

[2] Hints to a Princess, chapter xxvii. (Works, vol. vi. p. 421.) The whole chapter is in the same spirit.

LENCE, and is satisfied to wait for perfection till he is admitted a member of the church triumphant." "He is so little given to change, that he rejoices in belonging to a church of whose formularies we have already seen how much he had to say in commendation. In these standards he rejoices to see truth, as it were, pinned down, hedged in, and, as far as possible in this mutable world, preserved and perpetuated. Her significant and scriptural ordinances, and the large infusion of Scripture in her offices and liturgy, secure her from the fluctuations of human opinion; so that, if ever the principles of any of her ministers should degenerate, her service would be protected from the vicissitude. No sentiments but those of her prescribed ritual can ever find their way into the desk, and the desk will always be a safe and permanent standard for the pulpit itself, as well as a test by which others may ascertain its purity. He values her government for the same reason for which he values her liturgy, because it gives a definite bound to the inclosure, never forgetting that the fruit inclosed is of deeper importance than the fence which incloses. He always remembers, however, that, at no very remote period, when the hedge was broken down, disorder and misrule overspread the fair vineyard."[1]

It may well seem singular, that, with these and innumerable other attestations of her creed, the sincerity of Mrs. More's attachment to the Church should ever have been called in question; except,

[1] Christian Morals, chapter xxv. Works, vol. ix. pp. 415, 416. 429.

indeed, in a particular transaction already made known to the reader through the letter to Bishop Beadon; a fact which cannot be defended, though it may be explained. The principle of interpretation applicable to that and to every other instance in which Mrs. More's conduct could be deemed equivocal, is, in truth, solely *her excessive dislike of controversy*. She regarded religion so entirely as a matter of incessant practice, either in subduing internal corruption, or promoting externally the glory of God and the good of mankind, as to leave no leisure for disputations, in which, beside the loss of time, charity, the first of Christian graces, too often evaporated. "Controversy," she said, "hardens the heart and sours the temper." Accordingly, she not only was herself deficient in controversial reading, but it was her earnest advice to her friends never to meddle with controversial books. But this practice was not only erroneous in itself, but productive of error in matters where, assuredly, she desired most earnestly not to err. Though controversy be, for the most part, *immediately* conversant with the nonessentials of *religious* doctrine, though the "fence," rather than the "fruit," be generally the matter of contention, it is quite obvious, from reason as well as experience, how much the safety of the fruit is involved in the security of the fence; how much right notions of church authority and communion affect the vitals and essence of religion itself. It is not insinuated that Mrs. More's ecclesiastical opinions were unsound; such topicks are, indeed,

only touched incidentally in her writings, and where they are, she exhibits a genuine attachment to apostolical order; but the subject, though not necessarily, was, actually, so much connected with controversy, that she probably revolted from the acquirement of much knowledge at such a sacrifice.

On one question, certainly, Mrs. More's dislike of controversy led her into a total mistake of the doctrine she opposed; a mistake which any tolerable authority would have corrected. Nominally, she denied the tenet of baptismal regeneration; but, really, the doctrine which she combated under that name was one perfectly distinct from that which the Church of England, and all the Catholick church, had invariably held. Her Calvinistick friends, knowing of no grace but such as was irresistible, identified, consistently enough, *the communication of the Holy Spirit* with *actual renewal of heart;* and, as it is certain that every baptized person is not a holy Christian, she, of course, denied any *such* regeneration in baptism, as contrary to manifest experience. In a letter to the Rev. R. C. Whalley she says, "All the people that are hanged at Tyburn were, I suppose, baptized; but if they had all been regenerated, they would not have been hanged, I presume; at least they would not have committed crimes that deserved hanging." Certainly they would not, if they had *used* the grace afforded them in baptism; but their neglect of this use can never prove that *the grace was not afforded.* We cannot suppose that those who "grieve the Holy Spirit of God,"

by whatever sins, are *in a state of acceptance;* but to conclude that they have never *received the seal of the Spirit* would be to negative at once the plain inference from the Apostle's admonition, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, *whereby ye* ARE *sealed.*"[1] Those who "quench the Spirit,"[2] cannot, assuredly, be *in a state of grace;* yet that they have *received his grace* is implied by the very nature of their crime; and the Epistle to the Hebrews expressly mentions the possible *apostacy* of those who have been "made partakers of the Holy Ghost."[3] That such grace as this, real, but resistible, to the extent of "grieving," and even of "quenching" and "falling away," might ever have subsisted in the breast of the worst malefactor, Mrs. More would not have denied; but, unacquainted with the controversial writers of her Church, she never suspected that this was all that the Church meant by regeneration; that the grace of baptism might be a *real,* though not an *irresistible,* communication of spiritual aid; and that, consequently, an unrenewed heart was no absolute proof that grace had never been given to renew it. She forgot that a sacrament consists of two parts, the outward visible sign, and the inward spiritual grace; and that to deny the reality of the latter, is in truth to deprive the sacrament of its essence.

The negation of the sacramental efficacy of baptism is an invention of the Calvinists[4], to

[1] Eph. iv. 30. [2] See 1 Thess. v. 19. [3] Heb. vi. 4, 6.

[4] I say *of the Calvinists,* not *of Calvin;* who, though he *sometimes* (not always) interpreted the conversation in John iii. as his

whose system it is necessary. All grace, in their view, is irresistible, and indefectible; and, therefore, were it admitted that *any* grace were communicated in baptism, every baptized person would

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modern followers do, held baptismal regeneration in the sense of our own Church. In this he was less self-consistent than his successors; but his profound acquaintance with antiquity would not permit him to disturb a doctrine of which the Church had made no question. He not only interprets λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας (Tit. iii. 5.) of Baptism, but is quite explicit in his chapters on Baptism and Pædobaptism. "Rationem quoque firmissimam," he says on the latter, "obtendere sibi videntur cur arcendi sint à Baptismo pueri, dum causantur, non esse per ætatem adhuc idoneos qui signatum illic mysterium assequantur. Id autem est *spiritualis regeneratio*, quæ cadere in primam infantiam non potest. Itaque colligunt non alio loco habendos quam pro Adæ filiis, donec in ætatem adoleverint *secundæ nativitati* congruentem." "'Quomodo,' inquiunt, 'regenerantur infantes, nec boni nec mali cognitione præditi?' Nos autem respondemus, opus Dei etiamsi captui nostro non subjaceat, *non tamen esse nullum*. Porro infantes qui servandi sint (ut certe ex eâ ætate omnino aliqui servantur) ante à DOMINO REGENERARI MINIME OBSCURUM EST."—Institt. IV. xvi. 16. Few Calvinists, probably, are aware how completely their present views are opposed to those of their oracle. The Rev. Charles Simeon, a great authority with them, says, "In the opinion of the Reformers, REGENERATION *and remission of sins did accompany baptism.*" "The term [Regeneration] occurs but twice in the Scriptures; in one place *it refers to* BAPTISM, *and is distinguished from the renewing of the Holy Ghost;* which, however, is represented as attendant on it; and, in the other place, it has a totally distinct meaning, unconnected with the subject."—*Sermon on Deut.* v. 28, 29. Works, vol. ii. p. 256. In the same sermon, Mr. Simeon speaks of the application of the term regeneration to sanctification, as a practice *begun long since the days of the Reformers*, and the language of *modern* divines. He adds, "Let me then speak the truth before God. Though I am no Arminian, I do think that the refinements of Calvin have done great harm in the Church." Mr. Simeon does not appear to have been aware that the "refinement" in question was not Calvin's.

be a spiritual Christian, and irreversibly elected to the inheritance of heaven. But the universal piety of baptized persons is contrary to experience; hence it is evident that baptism has conferred no irresistible grace; and, therefore, on this hypothesis, no grace at all; beside, the contrary would suppose a dependence of election, the most absolute of the divine prerogatives, on the agency of men. The Calvinist, therefore, to prop his peculiar scheme, is obliged to deny the ancient and apostolical tenet of baptismal regeneration. This proposition is not only the consequence of the Calvinistick theory, but, by converse, implies it; for, regeneration being solely the work of the Holy Spirit, there is no way in which it is *pretended* to be obtainable by human effort, except in baptism; such therefore as are regenerate without baptism, must become so without any concurring act of themselves or others; and this exertion of the Divine power is what constitutes Calvinistick election.

Mrs. More's views on baptism did not, however, lead her to adopt the peculiarities of Calvinism: the doctrine which she opposed under the title of baptismal regeneration, being, as we have seen, a thing totally distinct, and no more the opinion of the Church of England than of Mrs. More herself. With the Calvinists, indeed, she confounded regeneration with renewal; and, knowing that the latter was not uniformly consequent on baptism, she denied baptismal regeneration. But not holding, with the Calvinists, the irresistibility of grace, she was under no necessity of denying

what is meant in our Church by baptismal regeneration,—the communication of the Holy Spirit to *enable*, not *compel*, the baptized to be holy; a doctrine which she not improbably held, without knowing, through her want of acquaintance with controversial writers, that it was all that the Catholick Church intended by the term baptismal regeneration.

Nothing, however, but gross ignorance or wilful perverseness could insinuate that Mrs. More was a Calvinist. It is true that this school of religionists, too often regarding their peculiarities as integral parts, if not the substance itself, of Christianity, were most anxious to convert her to their views, or, if this might not be done, to procure her apparent countenance for their opinions by ingratiating themselves with her. But they certainly never obtained her assent to their tenets. She challenges Bishop Beadon to point out in her eight volumes then published *a single Calvinistick passage*. She adds, "Lest this should be thought evasive, I have no hesitation in declaring that I do not entertain *one* tenet peculiar to Calvinism."[1] Her language on this point, in a letter to Dr. Whalley, is equally decisive, while the specimen of Calvinistick comment which accompanies it is amusing. Speaking of "Practical Piety," she writes:—"The high Calvinists have made a sort of party against it. I cannot help it. They are many of them very good men, but *if I had*

[1] Supra, pp. 208, 209.

adopted some of their opinions, I must have falsified my own." "One of their criticisms really made me smile. They say my calling the Sun *he* is *idolatrous!* as if I personified him into Phœbus or Apollo. But if you will turn to the xix.th Psalm, verses 4 and 6, and to Rev. i. 16, you will meet with the same idolatry." Certainly this style of criticism was not calculated to advocate the pretensions of Calvinism with a mind like Hannah More's. It is probable, however, that she had never read a single book on either side of this interminable controversy; but she could not reconcile Calvinism with one book which she read assiduously — the volume of infallible truth. Her anticalvinistick views were even strong; she has been known to say, "I HATE Calvinism;"[1] though she always guarded this language by adding that she did not hate Calvinists, for among them were some of the best men she had known. "Calvin," she said, "is certainly gone to heaven, and took many there."[2] She stated, however, at the same time, that she feared the disciples of the Genevan reformer were not equally charitable, and *believed that she could hardly be saved!* If premises may be tested by conclusions, the theory which would exclude from possible salvation the holy, the pious, the benevolent Hannah More, may safely be left to take care of itself.

The only plausible argument ever adduced to prove the Calvinism of Mrs. More is her well known

[1] Mr. Gwatkin's Memoranda. [2] Ibid.

letter to Sir John Sinclair on the loss of his pious and exemplary daughter, in which she thanks him for the present he had made her of that young lady's "Letter on the Principles of the Christian faith." Of Miss Sinclair Mrs. More says: —

"She was, indeed, a most extraordinary young lady. Her views of the Christian religion are very deep. She has taken, in a short space, a comprehensive survey of its doctrines. These doctrines, in her estimation, are not merely a beautiful theory, consisting of speculative dogmas, but the sound substratum of all practical holiness. Every other way of considering this all-important subject is, in my opinion, dangerous and delusive. Those who divide doctrine from practice, of which we have lately heard so many unhappy instances, separate what the Scriptures have joined in indissoluble union. This young lady's life seems to have furnished an admirable comment on her writing. She wrote as she lived; she practised as she believed."

As Miss Sinclair's views were decidedly Calvinistick, this commendation of Hannah More has been extended to those principles. This would, under any circumstances, be assuming too much. There was so much to commend in that remarkable young lady and her letter that her Calvinism might well be overlooked. But Mr. Gwatkin's memoranda furnish the most satisfactory explanation of the matter. "In her letter to Sir John Sinclair," says Mr. G., "she [Mrs. More] *objected to some of Miss Sinclair's opinions* in the memoirs of

herself. He, however, permitted the publication *with the exceptionable passage*, and Mrs. Hannah More's letter affixed, *without that of disapprobation.*"

Mrs. More was not only an intimate friend of Mr. Wilberforce, but a great admirer of his character; and from him she is believed to have drawn, as has been already observed, her ideal perfection of a Churchman, the "Candidus" of the "Christian Morals." It may therefore not be irrelevant to adduce *his* opinions on regeneration and Calvinism, as illustrative of hers. On the former subject his views appear to have been imperfect; on the latter no less clear and decided. "His engagement had been to supply a Preface to Witherspoon's Essay on Regeneration. The title seemed to promise controversial discussion, but his sole object was to recommend the practical instruction which had made this work a favourite with him; and '*I purposely abstained,*' he said, *from using the term regeneration, or expressing any opinion concerning the correctness of its application.*' He was not a little discomposed at finding afterwards that his preface had been prefixed to two of the treatises of Dr. Witherspoon. 'The Essay on Justification,' he says, 'I have never even read, but I am told it is decidedly Calvinistick, and *every year that I live I become more impressed with the unscriptural character of the Calvinistick system.*"[1]

Mrs. More was no believer in instantaneous conversions. She did not deny their *possibility*,

[1] Life of Wilberforce, vol. v. p. 161, 162.

but she questioned the fact of their occurrence. That of St. Paul, she observed, belonged to a miraculous age. And she might have added, that, even in St. Paul's case, the miracle was simply *evidential;* the *reason* of his conversion was miraculous, but *the conversion itself* was the ordinary work of the Spirit by his ordinary means, preaching and baptism. Indeed the regeneration of St. Paul by baptism is a matter which admits of no dispute.[1]

During the greater part of Mrs. More's life, the Church of England, upheld by power, seemed to bid defiance to external assault; and the Dissenters, whose hostility has been since unmasked by a different position of affairs, pursued their object less by rancorous libels and violent outrages, than by a quiet mystification of the question at issue between themselves and the Church, till it should cease altogether to be agitated or remembered. "The dangers of the country" (says an acute and intelligent writer of our day) "combined all parties against the common enemy, till every difference seemed to be forgotten, and Churchmen united generally with Dissenters, even for religious objects. Those who felt the inconsistency and foretold the consequences of these unions, were condemned, even by their own friends, as narrow-minded bigots. Thus dissent became exalted by the direct sanction, and almost equality, conferred

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[1] Acts ix. 17, 18. See also ibid. xxii. 16. "Arise, and *be baptized*, and *wash away thy sins*, calling upon the name of the Lord."

upon it; while Church principles, sunk to obtain the union, were at last scarcely remembered, except as the exploded prejudices of a less enlightened age. It became fashionable to express the utmost deference for dissent, until Churchmen attended and supported the Church, not as an institution of divine authority, but merely as the sect which they preferred; which, in fact, is to support it upon dissenting principles."[1] It is small matter of surprise, therefore, that one so unpractised in controversy as Hannah More should have partaken, in some measure, the general delusion; that, while unconsciously encouraging dissent, and, consequently, weakening the great depository of religion, the Church, she should think herself upholding Christianity in the abstract, and therefore engaged in a religious work. To this principle, perhaps, we are to refer her bequests to certain dissenting religious institutions. Although even these are all of a foreign or missionary class, and were made at a time when her judgment was doubtless much biassed by that of others; which, however pure or sincere, is still not to be taken as an infallible indication of what she would have done at an earlier period of life. This principle, too, as has been already said, is the key to the real character of an incident which has been alleged, alike by friends and enemies, in proof of her attachment to dissent,—her having once received the bread and wine in a meeting-house.

[1] Osler's Church and Dissent, ch. iii.

The minister of that meeting, who was her personal friend, was a gentleman of great eloquence and ability; and, as his doctrine was orthodox, and his demeanour towards Churchmen generally inoffensive, many members of the Church, in the spirit so ably described by Mr. Osler, resorted to his congregation. The piety and talent of this preacher were alleged by Sir Richard Hill, in his attack on Archdeacon Daubeny's "Guide to the Church," as sufficient reason why the members of the Church of England should desert the worship of their own churches; and the Archdeacon, at the risk of being denominated a "narrow-minded bigot," as he was by Churchmen of Sir Richard's school, manfully and convincingly defended the position, that no dissenting eloquence or information could impart advantages sufficient to counterbalance the evils of schism.[1] Such views, by the blessing of God on the labours of learned men, who have cheerfully encountered hard words in

[1] Mr. Wilberforce, though considered a more complying Churchman than Mr. Daubeny, was of the same opinion. "He dissuaded a relation, who complained that in her place of residence she could find no religious instruction in the Church, from attending at the meeting-house. '*Its individual benefits*,' he wrote, in answer to her letter of inquiry, '*are no compensation for the general evils of dissent*. The increase of Dissenters, which always follows from the institution of unsteepled places of worship, is *highly injurious to the interests of religion in the long run*.'"—*Life of Wilberforce*, i. p. 248. "L. off to Birmingham, to hear Hall preach to-morrow; I should have liked it, but *thought it wrong*. In attending publick worship we are not to be edified by talent, but by the Holy Spirit, and therefore we ought to look beyond the human agent."—*Ibid.* v. p. 140.

the cause of primitive truth and order, are beginning to prevail in the Church. The real merits of dissent, too, have been made known by the language and conduct of its patrons under altered circumstances. Even the gentleman, whose popularity with the Bath Churchmen then stood so high, having had the good taste as well as charity to select for an attack on the Church of England the tercentenary of the day when a Bishop of that Church presented this country with a vernacular version of the word of God. Things, however, stood differently in Mrs. More's time; and, in attending this meeting, she, in common with many whose information was better, never thought that she was compromising her principles as a Churchwoman. Of course, the inconsistency is not to be defended; still, it is altogether a very different thing from an act of separation. But I am here favoured with a letter of her sister Martha to Dr. Whalley, which so clearly exhibits the real character of the transaction, that, taken in connection with the letter to Bishop Beadon, it leaves nothing unexplained.

"Bath, July 14, 1802.

* * * "That I may be clearly understood by you, I will state my tale simply; for only truth is lovely. Before we came from Bristol, we had never thought of going anywhere but to church. When we came here, just then, the churches were, I am sorry to say, badly filled. —— was then in all his glory, and little else talked of. His chapel was full, and *half filled by people from church;*

I mean on a Sunday evening. *I have seen great numbers of clergymen there, and often Dr.* ——. *All this was thought nothing of by any body:* ——'s orthodoxy and talents bore every thing before them; nor was the thing remarked, that ever I heard of, till the French Revolution; when Tom Paine, &c. began to shew their cloven feet. I have often sat by Mrs. ——, and such sort of characters, whom it is not worth while to enumerate.

"At this time the cry of 'the Church' began to come forward; and all these harmless admirers of —— withdrew, as the prejudices of the people began to break out. It is many years since my sister was there; but I recollect perfectly, at the beginning of people's going there, my sister was there one morning with a little party. It was sacrament Sunday; —— was very fine. When it was over, they looked at each other; partly from curiosity, perhaps, but I hope also partly from desire, they staid; and, what may surprise you, *I know many high church people, and one gentleman and lady with* 10,000*l. a year, who have always the church prayers performed morning and evening in their family, did the same, from the same sort of feeling, without ever thinking of it since, or it even occurring to them that they had done any wrong thing.*"

Such was the real character of this transaction; and when "great numbers of *clergymen*" could be so fascinated by the charms of oratory as to give open countenance to an irregular ministry,

while "many high church people" could be allured by the like melodious witchery, to unite themselves in the most deliberate solemn act of communion with the renouncers of their Church, it could scarcely be expected that Hannah More, utterly unpractised in controversy of every kind, would see the real nature and tendency of what she was doing. Yet, as soon as she thought her attendance might prejudice the Church, she discontinued her visits at this meeting,—the only one she ever attended. And in regard to this particular transaction, it was not done deliberately; it was the act of a moment of irresolution. She regretted it, and never repeated it.[1] Nor did she attend the meeting when there was service in the church, except when precluded from reaching church by the weather, to which her delicate frame was necessarily subservient.

Nor has Hannah More been silent on the subject of dissent; nor is she, by any means, to be classed with the vulgar herd of those who profess that it is no matter whither the Christian goes, provided the Gospel is preached. Some of her remarks on this subject are peculiarly sensible and forcible. The Dissenters invariably instil their prejudices into all their teaching. The Church, assuredly, has not done enough to arm its members, especially the poor and ignorant, who are most exposed, against those sophistries and misstatements which almost every Dissenter has at ready command. This sort of instruction, in the

[1] Letter to Bishop Beadon, supra, p. 202.

proper place and quantity, is most desirable and would be most beneficial; and thus Mrs. More speaks of it: "With their religious instructions there should be mixed a constant sense of the excellence of *their own church*, the privileges of belonging to it, THE MISCHIEF OF DEPARTING FROM IT, the duties which lie upon them as members of it."[1] In her chapters "On novel Opinions in Religion," and "on the ill effects of the late Secession," her language is unequivocal. The following passages may serve as instances. "It is not the entertaining a dangerous opinion, it is this rage for proselyting to new opinions, which constitutes the most malignant part of the mischief. An erroneous doctrine not propagated, hurts none but him who holds it; but propagating it to unsettle the minds of multitudes, to deteriorate the Gospel, and to *disturb the peace and unity of the Church, is surely no light evil*, especially in a country like ours, proverbial for its credulity and love of novelty; and *in a Church like ours, which has been reformed, sifted, and purified beyond the example of any other in the Christian world.*"[2] "The present is, especially among the lower ranks, an age of rebuke and blasphemy; and what is so likely to augment the popular hostility to Christianity, and neglect of the Established Church, which is founded upon it, as when they see some of its ministers reprobating, at one time, the Church

[1] Hints to a Princess, ch. xxxix. Works, vol. vi. p. 459.
[2] Works, vol. iv. p. 286.

which they warmly defended at another?—when they see them actually renouncing it as unchristian, and setting up a new system in opposition to it? Where, then, is truth to be found, may not even the more sober amongst the people say, if it is not found in that Church, in defence of which so many of her divines, so many of her bishops, were led to the scaffold and the stake? Will not the loose and careless be likely to be confirmed in impiety, when they see these men, who were fostered in her bosom, who had subscribed to their belief in her articles, who had been warm beyond their fellows in the admiration of her liturgy, her doctrines, and her discipline,—when they see these men not only desert her altars, but take up arms against her? When they behold a perpetual conflict between Christian ministers,—for a church that is attacked must be defended,—will they not think that an establishment which is so frequently assailed, which requires such continual vindication, from which there are so many recent deserters, must needs be an erroneous and unsound Church, and even the Scriptures, on which it is founded, uncertain, if not false?

"What is so likely as this defection to give confidence, without the least intention of doing so, to that spirit of infidelity which used to skulk in corners, and stab from behind a mask, but now avows itself boldly, bares its unblushing front to publick gaze, spurns at law as well as decency, openly defies government, which it used to fear, as well as God, whom it never feared?

"Was it not enough that these low, designing demagogues,—men who think one religion as good as another, and no religion best of all,—was it not enough that these open violators of order, truth, and justice, should, as the most probable means to accomplish their political mischiefs, endeavour to overturn the Church, by bringing her creeds, and her other holy services, into contempt; insulting, by their profane parodies, all that is grave, and rendering ridiculous all that is good? Yet, from such men, such attempts excite our regret and astonishment less than those we have been contemplating. How grievous is it, when persons of a totally different description are, perhaps, undesignedly, contributing to help on the work which, we are persuaded, they abhor!—when decorous and religious men, though by other devices, and with other weapons, may be contributing to accomplish the work of these vulgar politicians, and assisting, in no inconsiderable degree, to discredit the Church which the others are labouring to subvert!"[1]

Nor less express is Mrs. More in the "Hints to a Princess." "The circumstance attending the Reformation which has been most regretted was, that a portion of the Protestants were dissatisfied with it, as not coming up to the extent of their ideas; and that this laid the foundation of a system of dissent, which broke the uniformity of public worship, and led, at length, to a temporary over-

[1] Works, vol. iv. pp. 296, 297, 298.

throw both of the ecclesiastical and civil constitution.

"On these events, as human transactions, our subject does not lead us to enlarge. If the above remarks, with those in a foregoing chapter, on the peculiar character of the English establishment, be just, *these persons, however conscientious, were opposing, without being aware of it, an institution which, from its excellent tendency and effects, seems to have been sanctioned by Providence.*" [1]

To her ignorance of controversy is also to be referred the only remark partaking of a bitter or uncharitable spirit which was ever known to issue from the lips of Hannah More. She was devotedly attached to the Bible Society above all other religious associations; she annually entertained at Barley Wood great numbers of its officers, patrons, and friends; and its anniversary at Wrington was always a festal day in the village kalendar. It was her favourite maxim, which she professed to have learned from no less an authority than a Bishop of the English Church, that none could object to belong to this Society, save through ignorance, infidelity, or popery. As though, among such objectors, whether right or wrong in the objection, there were not hundreds, friends, too, of Mrs. More herself, whose piety and enlightenment would compete with those of the Society's most zealous supporters. But, never having entered into *the controversy* on the subject, she assumed

[1] Works, vol. vi. p. 453.

an identity of cause between the Bible Society and *the Bible;* to the diffusion of which none certainly can object but through ignorance, infidelity, or popery.

Mrs. More's antipathy to controversy led her also to mistake the nature of this and other religious societies. She was, for very nearly half her life, a member of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge; although, when the Bible Society was instituted, she decidedly gave the latter the preference. She wished an approximation to take place between these two societies, considering the new institution, as she expressed it, "more grand and universal in its plan." It is not easy to see how any such approximation could have been made, or how the interests of Christianity would have gained by the experiment. The diffusion of Christian knowledge was, indeed, equally the object of both societies; but the one purposed to effect this by the distribution of Bibles only, while the other was wholly unlimited in its instruments, and was as free to build a church, establish a school or a library or a mission, print and circulate prayerbooks and tracts, or promote Christian knowledge in any conceivable way, as to distribute Bibles. From this account of the matter, which none acquainted with the merits of the subject will venture to deny, it would seem that the commendation "more grand and universal" would apply rather to the society which could work by *all* instruments, than to that which was limited to the employment of *one.* But however this may

be, the Bible Society, in approximating to the other by the use of other means than the Bible, would have lost a part of its dissenting patronage, and therefore of its means of efficiency; while the Christian Knowledge Society, by surrendering any part of its exclusive connection with the Church, would have been "promoting," at best, a mutilated and imperfect "Christian Knowledge," by suppressing the discussion of many important subjects to conciliate Dissenters. Nothing but a Bible Society could, without compromise, unite, for a single religious object, every shade of creed professing a scriptural derivation, and even some shades of those which do not. The attempt to associate "jarring sectaries" in the promotion of Christian knowledge by any other means would have been as efficacious as the horological experiment of Charles V.

The charge of *Methodism* was brought against Hannah More by two very different descriptions of adversaries; those who applied the term to every thing like earnestness or seriousness in religion, and those who professed to see in her schools a system analogous to that of Wesley, and, in some degree, sympathizing with his society. The first of these classes may be best dismissed with silent contempt; the latter may be admitted to be right in regard to the analogy, without any impeachment of Mrs. More's orthodoxy. Methodism, as originally projected by Wesley, was nothing more than a *methodical* improvement of the provisions already made by the Church; and, at first, a scru-

pulous jealousy obtained in his societies of interfering with the Church appointments and services. Had Methodism continued on this footing, it would have been a valuable auxiliary to Church appointments, and the good which it unquestionably did is referable to this part of its constitution. To Methodism, in this light, Mrs. More's schools certainly bore some resemblance. They were instituted to carry out the provisions of the Church[1]; they brought the children regularly to church; and the evening meetings of adults, which approached the nearest to original Methodism in their resemblance to class meetings, were held under the immediate sanction and approbation of the parochial minister. Mrs. More's institutions were, in fact, what Wesley's would have been, had he continued orderly and sober-minded. But they had no affinity whatever with his errors of later life, whether in doctrine or discipline, nor with the extravagances of his disciples. They

[1] In a MS. account of Mrs. More's schools, drawn up in her own hand, with which I am favoured by the kindness of a friend, she says, "*As one of my grand views is to attract the people to the Church*, I have, during eleven years' practice, found this one of the best means of accomplishing this end; for, by being enabled to understand what they hear at church, they begin to delight in going there, which they will seldom do while in total darkness. This practice I have found of such service, that it has led me to wish that the parish school were made a house of subordinate instruction to the church, where both old and young might be instructed in *the Bible, the Liturgy, and Catechism*." Immediately afterwards she adds, what is especially pertinent to this part of the subject, "and this, *under the eye of a pious clergyman, would be one of the best* COUNTERACTORS *of Methodism*."

were in orderly connection with the Church, and, indeed, cautiously guarded from enthusiasm; the cases in which any tendency to fanaticism appeared having been promptly attended to. Mr. Wilberforce, considering the Methodists as Churchmen, had recommended Mrs. More to procure a Wesleyan master for her school at Cheddar, as better adapted than a more regular person for the instruction of the very ignorant. This Mrs. More refused to do. If further evidence could be required, it would be found in the fact, that nine out of ten of the clergy in whose parishes she had established schools came forward, during the Blagdon controversy, to give testimony to the regular and orthodox economy of these institutions. They were, indeed, so far from connected with the Methodists, that they were even opposed to and opposed by that society. Some observations on this subject have been already given in the letter to Bishop Beadon; and in the document quoted in the last note, Mrs. More says, "Singing psalms being one of the great attractions by which the Methodists draw people *from* the Church, it seems to me but fair to *combat* them with their own weapons, and to use it as an instrument to draw them back *to* it. *The Methodists do not like me, nor my schools, and I have had the honour of being preached against by name from their pulpits.*" In a letter to Mr. Addington she says, "All the poor whom I have instructed are loyal to a man, and *I am calumniated by the Methodists for attaching so many to Church and State.*" Indeed it would have

been singular if these schools had been conducted on methodistical principles, in the sectarian sense, as Mrs. More had an antipathy to the peculiar doctrines of Methodism—disbelieving such conversions as were alleged to take place without evident causes; never thinking she had attained, or could attain, perfection [1]; and never experiencing, amidst all her comforts, any of those raptures which the Wesleyans deem necessary concomitants of the new birth; but, on the contrary, being never without a deep and humiliating sense of sin and unworthiness in the presence of God. Her reply to some Moravian ladies who visited her one morning at Barley Wood, that, "*if ever she* CHANGED *her religion*, she would adopt theirs," is conclusive that she had not adopted theirs; while it is also conclusive that her tenets were less dissimilar from theirs than from those of others; which (assuming them to be identical, or nearly so, with those of the Methodists,) she might truly say, as a member of the Church of England.

Nothing, in later times, has contributed more to confirm the opinion that Hannah More was a Methodist than the recently published Remains of the late Mr. Alexander Knox. Mr. Knox appears to assert the identity of his opinions with those of

[1] The "perfectibility" of human nature was a favourite crotchet of Wesley, and regarded by him as almost an essential of the Gospel. How opposite Mrs. More's opinions were to this may be seen in her short observation, "The Gospel *can* make no part of a system in which the *absurd* idea of PERFECTIBILITY is considered as applicable to fallen creatures." — *Strictures on Female Education*, ch. i. Works, vol. v. p. 25.

Mrs. More; and, as his parents were Methodists, and himself the intimate of Wesley and Adam Clarke, and, not unfrequently almost professing Methodism[1], it might naturally be concluded that Mrs. More was methodistical also. But a perusal of Mr. Knox's writings, and of those of Hannah More, is quite sufficient to show that their sentiments were very far indeed removed from identity. Indeed, Mr. Knox's opinions are by no means self-consistent; and, no doubt, modified by the peculiarity of his nervous temperament. In this respect he and Mrs. More were widely dissimilar. Both invalids from youth, one was naturally desponding, the other constitutionally cheerful; the views of one were dependent on his condition of body, those of the other never seemed in the smallest degree to be subjected to the influences of pain or indisposition. Their great point of resemblance was the supreme importance they both attached to religion as a living principle of conduct[2]; yet even here there was a dissimilarity; Mr. Knox's religion partaking more of the contemplative and mystical, while Mrs. More's inclined

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1 "My attachment to Methodism is *identical* with my attachment to Christianity."—Knox's Letter to Dr. Alcock. (Remains, vol. iv. p. 111.) There is much in Mr. Knox's writings to the same effect, were this the place to produce it.

2 It is perhaps, after all, to this agreement that Mr. Knox alludes in his identification of his opinions with those of Hannah More. We find it so stated expressly in a letter to George Schoales, esq. (Remains, vol. iv. p. 174.) "Hannah More and I are substantially of the same school; *that is, we both make it our object to pass through the form of godliness to the power thereof.*"

to the active and practical. Not that there was any defect, in either of these excellent persons, of the quality in which they comparatively fell short. A sufficient illustration may be found in the single fact, which must be admitted by all acquainted with the two characters, that Mr. Knox was as incapable of originating and conducting the Mendip schools and clubs, as Mrs. More was of writing those profound philological and argumentative essays, which can never miss of exciting deep interest, even where they fail to ensure conviction.

Neither in Church or State could Mrs. More be said to belong to *a party*. Her opinions were only derived from Scripture and observation. She was a churchwoman, because she saw the Church in accordance with Scripture; but she belonged to no faction within the walls. With all its inconveniences, her anticontroversial bias had, undoubtedly, this advantage, that, by keeping her ignorant of party contentions, it kept her unconcerned in them. In politicks she knew no party but her country; and if she was, as undoubtedly she was, ardently attached to the policy of Pitt, and his successors of the same school, it was only because she traced in that policy, and in the conduct of its opponents, the true interests of her fellow subjects. On reading those verses of Cowper,—

"Poor England! thou art a devoted deer,
Beset with every ill but that of fear;
Thee nations hunt; all mark thee for a prey;
They swarm around thee, and thou standst at bay:
Undaunted still, though wearied and perplex' :
Once Chatham saved thee—but who saves thee next?"[1] —

[1] Table Talk.

she said, with great animation,—

" Who saves?—Again the glorious trophy's won,
For Chatham's name is lost in Chatham's son;
To him the Muse a loftier praise shall yield—
A sword was Chatham—Pitt, both sword and shield."

Her feelings on the resignation of the patriot minister may best be gathered from her own words in a letter to Dr. Whalley:—" We have been all consternation at the great political revolution. The loss of our idol, Pitt, was a blow that required firmer nerves than I possess to sustain with equanimity. I would be ready almost to apply to him Antony's superb encomium on Cæsar,—

' He was the foremost man of all this world.' [1]

It is true we are still promised the aid of his unrivalled talents; and of his exalted patriotism we are, I trust, no less sure than when he ostensibly held the reins. Yet *responsibility* makes a vast difference in the execution of affairs. But it is not merely his retiring that appears to me so afflicting; for I confess that no alliance of foreign powers against us abroad, no French invasion at home, can strike my mind with so prophetick a dismay as division and distraction in our councils. All my friends who come near enough to judge, and who cannot be suspected of flattering the *set-*

[1] This appears to have been a *lapsus memoriæ* on the part of Mrs. More; the expression, " The foremost man of all this world," is applied by Shakspeare's *Brutus* to Cæsar. (Julius Cæsar, act iv. scene 3.)

ting sun, speak in the warmest terms of the disinterestedness and unambitiousness of Pitt's recent conduct."—On the death of this unequalled statesman, Mrs. More thus addresses Dr. Whalley: "When we requested you to favour us with a line in case any very special circumstance should occur, little did we imagine what that circumstance would be. It is, in truth, the only calamitous great event which we never thought of calculating upon. I am afraid we of this house have been almost sinful in our sorrow. *Patty has scarcely had a dry eye since*, and we are too fond of ransacking different newspapers, which our friends have been sending us from town, for fuel to feed our sorrow. To speak soberly, I cannot forbear considering the death of this incomparable statesman, in this moment of publick danger, as a token of the divine displeasure against our country. It is singular that Nelson and Pitt (I make no comparison between the *great* loss of the one and the *irreparable* loss of the other) should have been the only two mortals of whom Buonaparte stood in awe, and that one should have died the day fortnight that the other was buried. God, indeed, *can* raise up as able and as upright a minister, but as He has not done it before, we have no reason to hope He will do it again.—Yet, perhaps, in infinite mercy He has taken away the instrument to teach us to look more to the hand that employed him. For us who are left, the event is terrible; for him who is removed, I cannot conceive a more glorious lot—to have been for twenty years the means,

under heaven, to carry his country through difficulties unparalleled, and then to have been favoured with a pious and easy death, at a moment when his own bodily sufferings added to the attacks which were preparing for him by those fierce assailants, whose rancour even his death, I doubt, will not subdue! I assure you that I have hardly ever known an event which has made this world look so little in my eyes. In one sense we may say that we have seen an end of all perfection." "I own I have great satisfaction in the manner of Mr. Pitt's death, which I could not have felt had he exhibited a more stoical firmness and the fortitude of a philosopher. But to see so strong, and, as it was reckoned, so proud a mind, express so much resignation and charity, so deep a sense of his own unworthiness, and such a reliance on the merits of his Redeemer, is a circumstance not only of much comfort, but of high example."

Of the union of Church and State, Mrs. More has expressed her approval in the strongest language.[1] She held that it was the duty of the ruler, as much as of the parent, to provide for the spiritual welfare of his charge. And in this view she entertained the gravest sense of the responsibility incurred both by sovereigns and ministers in the exercise of church patronage. Having expatiated on the importance of the Church of England to the political as well as religious interests of the country, she thus proceeds: "If such,

1 See the whole of the xxxviiith chapter of "Hints to a Princess."

then, be the value, and such the results of the English ecclesiastical establishment, how high is the destiny of that personage, whom the laws of England recognise as its supreme head on earth! How important is it, that the prince, charged with such an unexampled trust, should feel its weight, should understand its grand peculiarities, and be habitually impressed with his own unparalleled responsibility! To misemploy, in any instance, the prerogative which this trust conveys, is to lessen the stability, and counteract the usefulness of the fairest and most beneficial of all the visible fabricks erected in this lower world. But what an account would that prince or that minister have to render, who should *systematically* debase this little less than divine institution, by deliberately consulting, not how the Church of England may be kept high in publick opinion, influential on publick morals, venerable through the meek yet manly wisdom, the unaffected yet unblemished purity, the energetick yet liberal zeal of its clergy;—but, how it may be made subservient to the trivial and temporary interests of the prevalent party, and the passing hour?

"Besides the distribution of dignities, and the great indirect influence which this affords the prince, in the disposal of a vast body of preferment; his wisdom and tenderness of conscience will be manifested also in the appointment of the chancellor, whose church patronage is immense. And in the discharge of that most important trust, the appointment of the highest dignitaries, the

monarch will not forget that his responsibility is proportionably the more awful, because the exercise of his power is less likely to be controlled, and his judgment to be thwarted, than may often happen in the case of his political servants.

"Nor will it, it is presumed, be deemed impertinent to remark, that the just administration of this peculiar power may be reasonably expected as much, we had almost said even more, from a female, than from a monarch of the other sex. The bishops chosen by those three judicious queens, Elisabeth, Mary, and Caroline, were generally remarkable for their piety and learning. And let not the writer be suspected of flattering either the Queen or the Bishop by observing, that, among the wisdom and abilities which now adorn the bench, a living prelate, high in dignity, in talents, and in Christian virtues, is said to have owed his situation to the discerning piety of Her present Majesty.

"What an ancient Canon, cited by the judicious Hooker, suggests to bishops on the subject of preferment, is equally applicable to kings: — *It expressly forbiddeth them to be led by human affection in bestowing the things of God.*"[1]

It was, indeed, the combination of the Church's cause with that of the State in this country that principally excited Mrs. More's interest in the great struggle of the revolutionary war, and sup-

[1] Hints to a Princess, chapter xxxvii. (Works, vol. vi. p. 432—434.)

ported her with hope throughout it. The most youthful bosom in the king's dominions beat not higher than that of the sexagenarian Hannah More with

> "The emotions of the spirit-stirring time,
> When breathless in the mart the couriers met,
> Early and late, at evening and at prime;
> When the loud cannon and the merry chime
> Hail'd news on news, as field on field was won."[1]

and as every new victory was greeted by the village bells, a cake and a bowl of punch was sent into the kitchen of Barley Wood, to drink "the King's health, and prosperity to his Majesty's arms."

The following letters, written during that period, are illustrative, and may not be uninteresting.

"TO THE RIGHT HON. JOHN HILEY ADDINGTON.

"My dear Sir, "Nov. 27, 1813.

"To borrow the words of a Roman poet to a Roman minister, 'I should sin against the publick convenience,'[2] if I were to trouble you with my thanks every time you make us happy. To be Roman again, I must *decimate* my acknowledgments, and thank you for every *ten* victories which you report. I also think we must begin to confine bell-ringing to every other day, laurelling the mail coaches to three times a week, and illuminations to once a fortnight; after all these daily and hourly excitements, I know not how we shall be able to bear the *ennui* and dullness of riches and peace and security; we shall be in great danger of falling into the condition of a country one would not like to resemble, whose

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1 Lord of the Isles. Canto vi. 1.

2 "——————— in publica commoda peccem
Si longo sermone morer tua tempora, Cæsar."—Hor. ii. Ep. i. 3.

Mrs. More quotes from memory. It was not the minister, but the sovereign, whom Horace addressed.

character was, 'pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness.'[1] Astonishing events succeed each other so rapidly, that one has hardly time to reflect on the wonders of yesterday, before those of to-day drive them out of one's head. Two days ago we were crowning ourselves with *marigolds*, as the only orange-looking thing we could procure; but Holland is already forgotten, or merged in the mass of universal success.

"These groves of laurel which all the heroes of the continent are reaping, will, indeed, be glorious, if they lead, as lead they must, to the olive. I wish our Wellington despatches looked as much as the proclamations of the less enlightened northern conquerors look, to Him who breaketh the bow and knappeth the spear asunder.

"My dear Sir! may it please God to make you and your friends the honoured instruments of making a second peace! more durable, I trust, but not more honourable, or more necessary, than the last. I always rejoiced in that peace of Amiens, because, short as it was, it stopped the mouths of gainsayers at home, and showed the world that it was

'Our dear delight—not Fleury's more.'[2]

Your two gazettes last night, so kindly sent, travelled over the village within an hour; so that you rejoice many hearts besides that of,

My dear Sir,

Your most obliged and faithful,

H. More."

TO THE SAME.

"My dear Sir, "April 9, 1814.

"My joy is not the less extravagant because the whole civilised world shares it; nay, the thought that so many millions participate it increases one's individual portion of delight. Most cordially do I join in your pious ascription of 'Glory to God in the highest;' 'Peace and goodwill toward men' will follow of course. Did ever the hand of God write in such large and legible characters before?

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[1] See Ezek. xiv. 49.

[2] Pope, Imit. of Horace, book ii. sat. i. line 77.

" How good, how kind in you, my dear Sir, at such a moment, to think of your poor obscure friends at Barley Wood. But the happiness of making happy is not a small one.

" Yours, most gratefully,

" H. More.

" Where are you, ye Greys, ye Grenvilles, ye Whitbreads, ye Tierneys? What? quite chapfallen? I am almost sorry that the holidays rob us of their ingenious objections."

" TO MRS. ADDINGTON.

" My dear Madam, " April 13, 1814.

" How shall I thank you for your kindness! My hand was not steady enough, or my head rational enough, to write one line last night, as I wished to do, by way of emptying the overflowings of my joy while I read your manuscript gazette, and Patty your printed gazette, almost at the same time; distracting each other with crying out, ' Oh, hear *me!*' ' Oh, mind *me!*' Then came your enclosure, which was quite the *clincher*. Patty ran to the almanack, to cut out the monster's name from the list of sovereigns, where, if I had been superintendent of the press, it never should have found a place. My head is still so confused that I have only a vague indistinct sentiment of joy and gratitude; and such a whirl did the news give my spirits, that, after your despatches had been read twice, I found my head not capable of containing all the vanities of prosperities it contained. I used to admire the famous old book, ' *Wanley's Wonders*,' but what does that contain to be compared with Talleyrand and Sièyes become the friends of order and government?

" As to the wretched being who has caused all the calamities from which God has so graciously rescued the world, I did not think I should live to despise as well as to hate him; but he has rounded the vices of his character by the addition of the only one which I thought he wanted—abject cowardice.

" May it please God to make our gratitude bear some proportion to His mercies! We are much pleased with your anecdote of the Duchess of Oldenburg; is not her brother *Alexander the*

Greater? Best thanks and respects without number to Mr. A., who, I hope, is as well as happiness can make him.

"With love to Miss A.,

"I am, my dear Madam,

"Your very obliged and faithful,

"H. More."

"TO THE RIGHT HON. J. HILEY ADDINGTON.

"May 18, 1814.

"My dear Sir,

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"As to the wonders of the last month, it is a subject I dare not *tap*, as it would run *sans fin et sans cesse*, to your no small annoyance. I should fancy it was a dream, but that it has lasted so long, as to leave behind 'a sober certainty of waking bliss.' I congratulate you, dear Sir, and your noble brother, on having been the honoured instruments of bringing about this great work. I was pleased with Wilberforce, when he sent me word the peace was signed, 'that he believed it was much owing to the blessing of God on the exertions of a *virtuous ministry*.' I should like to take a peep at Alexander, who has practised magnanimity on a grander scale than any my scanty reading has presented. * * * Much as I approve all that has been done at Paris, I think I could have made one small improvement: I would have exchanged the pleasant isle of Elba for the barren one of the steep Holms, and made Madison[1] Buonaparte's mameluke. I hope Mrs. Addington will approve my amendment. With my best respects to her,

"I remain, my dear Sir,

"Your's obliged and grateful,

"H. More."

Such were Mrs. More's loyal sentiments towards the British Constitution in Church and State; and it was her attachment to this union that caused her, while extending the greatest liberality towards Dissenters of every kind, to feel a religious and

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[1] The President of the United States.

constitutional jealousy of putting the government of the country, whether legislative or executive, in the hands of those who were known to be unfriendly to the Established Church. In particular, she had the utmost horror of admiting the subjects of Rome to legislate for the free Church of this land; conceiving that this step would effect the separation of the ecclesiastical establishment from the civil, and issue in the ruin of both. It was during the ultimate agitation of that question, that the writer of this was honoured with his personal introduction to Mrs. More; and never will he forget the animated expression of her countenance, the full and steady tone, the indignant terms, the perfection of conversational eloquence, in which, at fourscore years, she denounced the "fear of man," which "bringeth a snare;"[1] the folly of attempting, by the surrender of every defence, to conciliate an irreconcilable enemy, and the shallowness of an expedient which, by the confession of those who pleaded it, was opposed to the eternal principle of right.

Mrs. More was always a reader; her strict economy of time allowing her to reserve from her schools, visits, correspondence, and literary exertions, a competent fund of leisure for this object. In divinity her reading was mostly, as might be expected, practical or devotional; but though slenderly acquainted with Christian controversy, she was well read in Christian evidence, in the

[1] Prov. xxix. 25.

study of which she took great pleasure. Bishop Butler's "Analogy" was with her, as it is with all who can appreciate it, in the highest favour; and, though no advocate of those rash, confident, and ill-instructed interpreters of unfulfilled prophecy, who would anticipate the advance of prophetick daylight, she always found great pleasure in the writings of sober, serious, and learned divines, who applied their high talents and great resources, with humility and reverence, to search the deep things of God. It was not so much the boldness, as the rashness, of such inquiries, which she deprecated. That highly original work, the "Mahometanism Unveiled" of the Rev. Charles Forster, which, even where it may not bring conviction to the reader, can never fail to enrich, invigorate, and stimulate his mind, was greatly admired by Hannah More. The following letter, acknowledging her receipt of a copy of that work, will prove highly illustrative of her theological taste to those who are (and what scholar or divine is not?) acquainted with "Mahometanism Unveiled."

TO THE REV. C. FORSTER.

"Clifton, May 8, 1829.

"My dear Sir,

"I must appear altogether unworthy of the valuable present you have had the goodness to make me, in having so long delayed expressing my gratitude for such a treasure. But I could not prevail on myself to write till I had made a further progress in the previous volumes than I have yet been able to make. I have been slowly

recovering from a tedious illness, since which an overwhelming round of company has interrupted most sadly my better pursuits.

"The great work you have undertaken, and so admirably executed, was a grand desideratum in literature; and, as *you* have executed it, you could hardly have made your country a more important present. If any thing could have added to my individual gratification, it would have been the endearing circumstance of an unpublished copy. This very original work, I trust, will make a great impression. I have found instruction and new information in every page I have read, but I have felt *astonishment* in the poetical morality, beginning at page 343. Your whole work has opened a new world to me, and will do so to many, I doubt not. It seems to be replete with original ideas. The worst is, that so learned a work requires a learned reader.

'For what light is, 'tis only light can show.'"

Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying" Mrs. More considered the best book ever published; but his popular designation, "the Shakspeare of divinity," she transferred to Richard Howe. This was high praise from her, whose admiration of Shakspeare was unbounded. This subject has been already noticed; and it will only remain to add a few short illustrations. When a very young girl, she would make little parties of her friends, whose recreation was to meet under a tree, and conduct a conversation entirely in the words of Shakspeare. "It was singular," she said, "how well the conver-

sation was kept up." In her early days, she visited the natal town of the poet, and brought away a piece of the mulberry tree planted by him, which she procured to be made into sugartongs, and presented to Mrs. Gwatkin, with the following verses:—

"I kiss'd the sacred shrine where Shakspeare lay,
And bore this relick of my bard away.
Where shall I place it, Phœbus?—'Where 'tis due,'
Apollo answer'd: and I send it—YOU."

The two former of these lines, with slight variation, were engraved on a silver plate which adorns the inkstand presented by Garrick to Hannah More, and made of the same material with the tongs.[1] In latest life she retained her love of Shakspeare. It was during her residence at Clifton that a friend found her one morning writing a vindication of her favourite against the implied degradation contained in the celebrated comparison of Homer, Virgil, and Milton.[2] The verses (written at *eighty-six*) want, perhaps, the freshness and vigour of earlier life; but, as illustrative, they may deserve insertion:—

"Here Shakspeare cried, with just heroick rage,
'*My* errors were the errors of the age:
Sometimes there seems a sentiment unchaste,
Oppos'd to modesty, and genuine taste;

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[1] See Vignette, chapter ii.

[2] "Three poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn;
The first in loftiness of thought surpass'd;
The next, in majesty; in both, the last;
The force of Nature could no further go;
To make a third, she join'd the other two."

Yet, seek where'er you will, you'll never find
A richer intellect—a loftier mind.
Who e'er, like me, could grasp th' united power
Of talents which had never met before?
In wit unequall'd; 'twas my wondrous skill
Which touch'd opposing passions at my will;
Child of each different Muse, 'twas still my part
To charm the fancy, and to break the heart;
My sov'reignty was vast, I had to choose
The comick gaiety, the tragick Muse.
Did ever Milton *all* your thoughts engage,
And make you laugh and weep in the same page?
Did Virgil ever weep, like good King Lear,
That he a daughter had? I greatly fear
Milton's a *mighty* man, above this earth,
Too great for jollity—too high for mirth.
To Britons, Romans, Greeks, I bid adieu,
Believing I shall live as long as you.
" ' I am, brother Poets,
Your admiring Friend; but not
Your humble Servant to command,
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.
" ' Stratford-upon-Avon was my birthplace, eagerly visited by an aged pilgrim called
HANNAH MORE.' "
" *Clifton, July*, 1831."

With her admiration of Shakspeare Hannah More constantly retained her predilection for the drama, which she had cultivated so successfully from the first.

Among more modern writers in polite literature, none enjoyed a larger portion of Mrs. More's favour than Sir Walter Scott. The battle in "Marmion" she considered "the finest that had been fought since Homer." She was far from insensible to the genius of Byron; but her dislike of the man certainly qualified her admiration of the poet.

Concerning Mrs. More in private life, nothing can be added to the exquisite and comprehensive delineation of Mr. Harford: "She lived and walked in an atmosphere of love." Her charities, on which she frequently expended 900*l.* per annum, were the labour of her life; and, as benevolence was the soul of her conduct, it was no less that of her conversation. Her alleged indifference to the evil of dissent (for that it was no more than allegation has been already shown) is, probably, to be referred to the Catholick love which she entertained towards all pious persons, and with which, notwithstanding their opinions, she cultivated the friendship of many Dissenters, and of some dissenting ministers. But if her inclination to dissent is to be inferred from this, her inclination to popery might, with equal reasonableness, be deduced from the fact that the pious Romanist found himself as much at home at Barley Wood as the pious Dissenter. For this conduct she may have been, in part, indebted to an occurrence which she thus related to the Rev. Charles Forster in 1826:— "Early in life, I was much captivated by the piety of the Jansenists, and, one day, spoke of them with enthusiastick admiration to Dr. Johnson. This called forth all his terrors; for the first and only time, he broke out upon me in a voice of thunder: 'Madam, let me hear no more of this; don't quote your popish authorities to me: I want none of your popery.' I was overwhelmed by the shock; and he saw it. His countenance instantly changed; his lip quivered; and, his eyes filled

with tears, he took my hand, and, in a tone of the gentlest emotion, he said, 'Child, (his usual address to me) never mind what I have said,—*follow true piety wherever you can find it.*'" This little incident had, evidently, much impressed her, and in men, as well as books, she sought, and delighted in, *true piety, wherever she could find it.* But it will by no means follow from this circumstance, that she concluded all systems of Christianity equally favourable to the growth of true piety; which, uncontroversial as she was, she assuredly did not.

Such was Hannah More. Few words will suffice to point the moral of so eloquent a life.

These pages will not have been written in vain, should they engage one heart to remember solemnly that "the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."[1] Do agreeable society, worldly celebrity, the homage of the distinguished and the gay, compose a scene of such enchantment and attraction that the soul would almost hesitate to exchange it for a crown which must be cast before the throne, and would actually revolt from the steep and narrow path of self-denial and diligence, by which alone it can climb to the eternal prize? Does death, which must prostrate all earthly pleasures, seem distant, and time enough in hand for the enjoyment of this world and the procurement of the next? Be it remembered that the life of Hannah More was prolonged far beyond the ordinary date of human ex-

[1] II. Cor. iv. 18.

istence; yet she never regretted that she withdrew so early from worldly pleasures to active and useful exertions, or lamented that she had not given more time to fashionable society, before she became seriously convinced that the life of a candidate for heaven must be a life of energy and beneficence. When the hour shall come which shall lay the reader's dust with Hannah More's, which course would he prefer to have run?

If it be allowable to urge worldly people with worldly arguments, the example of Hannah More may instruct them that they will not lose any of those friends, that fame, and that homage which they tender so dearly, by living for invisible and future things. This is, however, said on the supposition that the act is the offering of faith, not the experiment of doubt. Hannah More could never have attained, in the circles of the great, the glory which now surrounds her name to all posterity. She would never have been known throughout the world as the reformer of education, the interpreter of morals, the expositress of piety. Her name would have been fast sinking in that obscurity which is even now closing round the Sewards, the Piozzis, and the Montagus. By her retirement she lost no *acquaintances* she would have cared to retain, while she certainly acquired many *friends;* and, indeed, it was peculiarly the blessing vouchsafed to Mrs. More, that a heart so alive to all the kindly feelings was never permitted to want worthy objects for their exercise. She did, indeed, in all its fulness, realize the promise,

"Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."[1] Although actual retirement from the busier world appeared to be, and results seem to affirm that it was, the peculiar and appropriate sacrifice of Hannah More, it is not, of course, here insinuated, that retirement from the court and the city is of itself a duty or a virtue. It may often be the reverse of both; but the *principle*, to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," to live for eternity, and to surrender cheerfully and unhesitatingly the world's best in reliance on God's promises, and in gratitude for his insurpassable love in Christ, is the soul of religion; and it is this which is so happily exemplified in the conduct of Hannah More, while it is so cheeringly enforced by the encouraging reward which, even on this side the prize, has been bestowed on her. "There is no man," says our Lord, (and these pages are but a comment on that text) "that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold *now in this time*, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, *with persecutions*; and, in the world to come, eternal life."[2]

Nor will this volume have been written in vain should it arouse one indolent or desponding mind to a conviction of *the importance and efficacy of industry and perseverance*. The aims of Mrs. More

[1] Matth. vi. 33. [2] Mark x. 29, 30.

were certainly far above what any solitary and sickly female could seem likely to achieve; nay, she probably never anticipated the success which blessed her, but tried for much, that she might accomplish something. What she wrought, however, was done with unwearied zeal and diligence, and prayerful dependence on the divine blessing. Neither was her astonishing success altogether such as could only be expected from talents and endowments like hers. A mind far inferior, with equal piety, sobriety, and zeal, might have effected the same, so far as regards the schools and clubs, which alone have accumulated an amount of good, never, perhaps, to be summed until the last generation of time.

The example of Hannah More is also calculated to evince the value of polite learning, when subservient to the cause of religion. The precept "Give attendance to reading,"[1] dropped from the pen of one who made Aratus, Menander, and Epimenides speak the voice of revelation; and it is therefore but natural to believe that it alluded not only to Scriptural studies, but also to those points of valuable profane knowledge which might be useful for the propagation and defence of sacred truth itself. Certain it is that the stores of elegant and useful literature were proved by Hannah More to be applicable with great effect to the cause of religion.

Least of all will this volume be useless, should

[1] I. Tim. xiv. 13.

it excite one mind to the study of Mrs. More's writings, which can only prove unprofitable through their reader's fault. Calculated to form and to confirm the plain, pious Christian of the Church of England, they are, above all, inestimable to the sex which she adorned. Woman, as the precepts of Hannah More would make her, must command the respect, the esteem, and the affection of every man whose good opinion would be worth the possession. Happy in conscience, happy in the social relations, adapted to receive and to communicate happiness, she would indeed attain the perfection of her nature, and accomplish the end of her creation.

May these pages, too, be privileged to enforce the momentous truth, that the path of *true* excellence and *real* renown lies not through brilliant mental endowments, or great intellectual achievements! although these may, undoubtedly, be eminently serviceable in preparing the way, and may swell the pomp of the triumph. Had Hannah More rested in these things, even her worldly celebrity would have been greatly inferior to what it is. But the principle which constituted her greatness and generated her fame was one which "never faileth;" though "whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away."[1] It was that pure and heavenly CHARITY, the love of God because He first

[1] I. Cor. xiii. 8.

loved us,—the love of Christ for the "unspeakable gift" of redemption,—the love of mankind as redeemed by Him at infinite cost,—it was this great and expansive principle, which was the soul of all that Hannah More wrote and did. It was this that incited, as it enabled, her to employ her talents, acquirements, and labours for the high purpose of propagating virtue and happiness; a purpose which, under the influence of this principle, she executed in a degree incalculably surpassing all that had been done, or even contemplated, by the greatest of those philosophers who knew not, or despised, the meek but mighty philosophy of the Gospel. It was from this that she reaped the reward of a celebrity commensurate with all future time; and it is in this path that Fame will ever best prosper the advance of Ambition. But the great and most encouraging reward of Hannah More is unseen. She is where human fame is valueless, but where her acts have not perished; for she is where her "works do follow" her. There we can now see her only by that faith in which she lived and fell asleep; thither, through the same, the meanest abilities and the slenderest external advantages forbid none to arrive, who walk in her piety, her beneficence, and her diligence.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE Life of Mr. Wilberforce, lately published by his sons, affords, from the authentick source of Mrs. Martha More's journal, some particulars relative to the institution of the schools at Cheddar, which, though not received in time for incorporation with the Fifth Chapter, must not be withholden from the reader.

"In the month of August, 1789, Providence permitted Mr. Wilberforce and his sister to spend a few days at Cowslip Green. The cliffs of Cheddar are esteemed the greatest curiosity in those parts. We recommended Mr. Wilberforce not to quit the country till he had spent a day in surveying these tremendous works of nature. We easily prevailed upon him, and the day was fixed; but, after a little reflection, he changed his mind, appeared deeply engaged in some particular study, fancied time would scarcely permit, and the whole was given up. The subject of the cliffs was renewed at breakfast; we again extolled their beauties, and urged the pleasure he would receive by going. He was prevailed on, and went. I was in the parlour when he returned. With the eagerness of vanity (having recommended the pleasure), I inquired how he liked the cliffs?

He replied they were very fine, but the poverty and distress of the people was dreadful. This was all that passed. He retired to his apartment, and dismissed even his reader. I said to his sister and mine, I feared Mr. W. was not well. The cold chicken and wine put into the carriage for his dinner were returned untouched. Mr. W. appeared at supper, seemingly refreshed with a higher feast than we had sent with him. The servant, at his desire, was dismissed, when immediately he began, 'Miss Hannah More, something must be done for Cheddar.' He then proceeded to a particular account of his day, of the inquiries he had made respecting the poor. There was no resident minister; no manufactory; nor did there appear any dawn of comfort, either temporal or spiritual. The method or possibility of assisting them was discussed till a late hour. It was at length decided in a few words, by Mr. W.'s exclaiming, 'If you will be at the trouble, I will be at the expense.' Something, commonly called an impulse, crossed my heart, that told me it was God's work, and it would succeed; and though I never have, nor probably shall, recover the same emotion, yet it is my business to water it with watchfulness, and to act up to its then dictates. Mr. Wilberforce and his sister left us in a day or two afterwards. We turned many schemes in our head every possible way; at length, those measures were adopted which led to the foundation of the different schools."

The reader is requested to compare the following extract from the same work with the obser-

vations in page 88 of this volume, written before the Life of Wilberforce was published. "The moral desolation which he (Mr. Wilberforce) found in Cheddar, was a striking illustration of his common maxim, that 'the Dissenters could do nothing if it were not for the Established Church;' for the absence of a resident clergyman had brought the village into a state of universal ignorance." The reader will readily pardon the notice of this coincidence, who has felt the satisfaction of having his own independent views afterwards confirmed by their concurrence with those of minds which he respects and admires.

APPENDIX.

I.

From the Spanish, an early Translation of Hannah More's. *See p.* 11.

Cupid, the tyrant of the fair,
Purloin'd a lock of Delia's hair,
And with the golden cordage strung
The bow that 'cross his shoulders hung.

Pleas'd with the spoil, the urchin laugh'd,
And aim'd at me his deadliest shaft;
The shaft was sped on certain wing,
For Delia's hair composed the string.

" Stop, mischief-making boy ! " I cried;
" Thy bow and arrows lay aside;
With these new weapons keep the field;
Then I, and all mankind must yield."

II.

Verses by Hannah More to the Rev. Dr. Sir James Stonhouse on receiving a Volume of his Tracts and Meditations, 13*th June* 1774.

Whilst dauntless vice pursues its rapid way,
And boasts an almost universal sway;
Whilst well-bred priests their easy virtue bend,
To accommodate the failings of a friend;

Too mild, too sympathetically nice,
To probe their own, or shock their patron's vice;
Actively bad, or negatively good,—
No sin avoided, *no* desire withstood;
Whilst these at Folly's shrine devoutly bend,
Shall not Religion find *one* zealous friend?
Yes,—Stonhouse! But with life thy cares shall cease,
'Thou chosen envoy of the God of Peace.
Tis not because the Stagirite might praise
The finish'd meaning in thy polish'd phrase,
Nor that thou shunn'st the wild enthusiast's dream,
And the dull lifeless reasoner's cold extreme;
Not that thy evangelick pages glow
With all that piety and taste bestow;
That these neglected oratory restore,
And Paul at Athens seems to preach once more:
It is not these; though envy's self must own
In these thou stand'st unrivall'd and alone.
No;—'tis thy actions, more than sermons, teach;
For—Stonhouse *lives*, what others only *preach*.

On his upsetting a terrestrial Globe with his Foot.

'Tis said, the son of Philip wept to find
A conquer'd world unequal to his mind;
You both o'erturn'd a globe;—both felt the smart;
You only broke your shins—he broke his heart.
But you an Alexander's hint improve,
Nor spurn this world, till sure of that above.

Epitaph on Mrs. Lucia Palk, second Daughter of the Rev. Dr. Sir James Stonhouse.

What needs the emblem, what the plaintive strain,
What, all the art that Sculpture e'er express'd,
To tell the treasure that these walls contain?
Let those declare it most who know her best.

The melting pity she would oft betray
  Shall be with interest at her shrine return'd;
Connubial love connubial tears repay,
  And Lucia lov'd shall still be Lucia mourn'd.
Though Grief will mourn, and Friendship heave the sigh,
  Though wounded Memory the fond tear will shed,
Yet let not fruitless Sorrow dim the eye;
  To teach the living, die the sacred dead.
Though clos'd the lips, though stopp'd the tuneful breath,
  The silent clay, cold monitress, shall teach;
In all the alarming eloquence of death,
  With double pathos to the heart shall preach;
Shall tell the virtuous maid, the faithful wife,
  If young and fair, that young and fair was she;
Then close the useful lesson of her life,
  And tell them, what she is, they soon must be.

III.

Mrs. Gwatkin and her family possessed the gratitude and friendship of all the Misses More to the last hour of their lives. Her son, R. Lovell Gwatkin, Esq., to whose kind communications this volume is so much indebted, was the subject of Hannah's Muse, when she was about twenty-five years of age. The following are her verses to him on his twelfth birthday:—

Health to my Lovell! and a happy year,
Unvexed with pain, and undisturb'd by care!
May every true and valued bliss attend
Each future birthday of my much-lov'd friend!
O may your progress crown a mother's cares,
And added virtues wait on added years!
May ev'ry grace that from refinement flows,
And ev'ry charm that polish'd sense bestows;

The heart expanded, and the taste refin'd;
The well-bred manners, and the well-taught mind;
May these be yours! may these your youth engage,
Exalt mature and grace declining age!
Love Virtue,—follow her; nor think it hard
To adopt this maxim of the moral bard:
"A wit's a feather, and a chief's a rod;—
An honest man's the noblest work of God."

Hannah More also wrote an epilogue to Dr. Young's tragedy of "The Brothers," which was performed by the young gentlemen of the grammar school at Bristol in 1774, when Master Gwatkin sustained the part of Philip. The prologue on that occasion, being from the same pen, is here added.

A Prologue to Dr. Young's Tragedy of the Brothers, acted by the young Gentlemen of the Grammar School in Bristol, 1774. *Spoken by Master Dickenson, of Redruth in Cornwall, in the Dress of a Soothsayer.*

In ancient Rome, 'tis said, and ancient Greece,
In hurricanes of war, or calms of peace,
That *divinations* were by custom us'd;
(Pretenders then, as now, the world abus'd.)
Behold the ancient mode reviv'd!—in me
An augur with his aruspice you see:
Nor let this trifling difference surprise,
They search'd the entrails, but *I* search the eyes;
By *those they* promis'd fortune to the State;
By *these I* mean to read our present fate.
But yet against establish'd rules I strive,—
For here the augurs die, the victims live:
We die a kind of metaphorick death;
We lose our resolution, not our breath.
The flight of birds, the death of beasts, is vain;
I smile at omens, laugh at victims slain;

Careless of Nones, of Calends, and of Ides,
If you approve, indifferent all besides;
A little tribe of soothsayers waits behind,
To learn if you (their oracle) are kind.
Come forward then, my friends![1] come on!—appear!
With modest courage, unalloy'd by fear!
The oracle declares, to crown our toil
With rich reward, each lady here shall smile.
One ancient superstition then I'll praise;
If *they* are pleas'd, there still are *lucky days*.

An Epilogue to the same, spoken by Master Gwatkin.

'Tis no unusual mode to introduce
An ancient apophthegm for modern use;
That *human life's a play*, mankind allow;
The fact is prov'd,—'tis mine to show you how.
In the first act, 'till polish'd, taught, and warm'd,
The plan is rude, the character unform'd.
With pains we study in our early age
The unrelish'd beauties of the classick page;
Through academick scenes we next must stray,
Perhaps the fairest of our moral play:
And now the unfolding character is known,
Now vice or virtue marks us for her own.
The *painter Hope* her decoration gives;
Oh! how the gay fantastick scene deceives!
In perspective how fair the picture lies!
Approach — the beauties vanish from your eyes;
For what at proper distance seem'd so fair,
Is rude plain canvass when you view it near.
Our *reason* is the burning *lamp* — a light
Though often dimm'd, yet ne'er extinguished quite;

[1] To the performers.

We next observe in the musician's skill
The *harmony* of the well-govern'd will;
And if we sometimes pass the destin'd bourne,
The *prompter Conscience* warns us to return.
Through the well-acted piece may heaven inspire
The critick's judgment, and the poet's fire!
Give every nicety of time and place,
Each scene its spirit, and each act its grace!
May each engrave this maxim on his heart,
That 'tis the acting only makes the part!
Howe'er we differ, let us join in this,
To bear in mind the *Author of the piece.*
The parts himself allotted let us act,
True to his meaning, to his sense exact.
Then, though the catcall Envy fill the pit,
Though Malice lurk behind the mask of Wit,
Though loud misjudging galleries may blame,
If well we've acted, we're secure of fame.
Let Heaven the great catastrophe controul,
Unus'd the dagger, and unwish'd the bowl.
This short rehearsal of our drama o'er,
If you cry "*plaudite,*" we wish no more.

The following verses to Miss Gwatkin (twelve years of age) are curious, as containing, at a period of Mrs. More's life when she was mingling extensively with the great and the gay, and was the object of general curiosity and fashionable adulation, a proof how deeply her mind had received those true principles of female excellence which were afterwards expanded in her "Strictures," "Hints," and "Cœlebs."

Let others praise each true or fancied grace
Of Charlotte's person or of Charlotte's face;
Let others *flatter*, — be it mine to *mend;*
The best kind office of a real friend.

Friendship disdains to dictate lying lays;
It scorns to flatter, though it loves to praise.
Be yours each noble *virtue* of the mind,
Each fair *accomplishment*, each *thought refin'd.*
Study the *truest* knowledge to obtain;
'Tis slight acquirements make a woman vain.
The shallow stream loud rolls its noisy tide,
While deepest waters soft and silent glide,
Enrich the plains and valleys as they flow,
And freshness and fertility bestow.
Chief let *humility* your thoughts engage;
The fairest virtue of your sex and age;
Those who at too much admiration aim
Lose that to which they have a real claim.
She who the homage of mankind neglects,
Is sure to meet the reverence she rejects;
For who extorted dues but slowly pays,
To meekness renders voluntary praise.
The happy talent Nature has supplied
Demands your *gratitude*, but not your *pride;*
'Tis not a *gift*, 'tis but a *loan* at best;
Heaven will demand it back with interest.
Still make your studies, your employments tend
To the best, wisest, and the noblest end;
So shall your bliss by just gradations rise,
A *Christian* here — an *angel* in the skies.

IV.

The Expedition of a Female Poet [*Hannah*], *and a Female Printer*[1] [*Sarah*] *to Blagdon Vicarage.*

Descend, O ye Muses! and help me to tell
The adventures which Sarah and Hannah befel,

[1] She is so styled on account of her having printed some novels, &c.

When by Francis, and eke by Constantia invited,
By strong inclination impell'd and incited,
They quitted the town, and the smoke that it yields,
For the verdnre and freshness of woods and of fields.
Indulgent Apollo had sent them a day,
The sweetest of Summer, the mildest of May:
Of mortals below, and of angels above,
Of books, and religion, of beauty, and love,
They talked indistinctly with female confusion;
For quick their transition, and short their conclusion.
Now Sarah began her poor mind to perplex
With the tremors, and terrors, and fears of her sex:
For the Naiads, those fav'rites of poets' soft dreams,
Had forsaken the rivers, and quitted the streams,
Had emptied their urns, and had deluged the glades,
And the Dryads dismiss'd from their primitive shades.
At length they arrive at the sign of the Bell,
Which historians agree is the Blagdon Hotel;
How brown was the toast! and how good was the tea!
(Though of yellowish brown, somewhat ting'd with bohea.)
Now the village bell toll'd as a signal to pray,
And, the breakfast unfinish'd, they hastened away:
But not till they'd sacrific'd first to the Graces,
And trimm'd up their knots, and adjusted their laces;
(For women, say satirists, never forget
To determine of dress the belov'd etiquette.)
The church-yard so decent, so smooth the pathway,
I thought 'twas *thy* church-yard, O soul-moving Gray!
Till I found 'twas where *Constance*[1] herself had immur'd,
And sad *Theodosius*[1] the world had abjur'd.
The reverse of precedency now, in the porch,
Prevented their entering directly the church;
Quoth Sarah, "Go forward, for fitter your face is;
I'm a quaker, you know, and not used to such places;

[1] Titles of Dr. Langhorne's works.

Modes ecclesiastical suit not my creed.
So you shall go first."—" No, I beg you'll proceed."—
More oppress'd with confusion than heat of the weather,
Most consciously awkward, they entered together.
The farmers were decent, the damsels were neat,
And not whiter thy walls, O rever'd Paraclete!
How the rusticks all stare, and the village maids frown,
At Hannah's gay ribbons, and Sarah's gay gown!
Nay, Francis himself rais'd his eyes from his book,
And cast on them both an encouraging look!
When the preacher declaim'd, 'twas Demosthenes spoke!
From Fenelon's lips such "prompt eloquence" broke!
Meantime the sage friar, his treasure to guard,
Kept her hid in a chapel[1] well grated and barr'd;
For he fear'd to exhibit his beautiful nun
To the stare of the clowns, or the gaze of the sun.
With musick congenial, and psalmody meet,
The manes of Sternhold the villagers greet;
The prayers now concluded, and homily done,
The travellers were join'd by the friar and nun.
From the twain a most cordial reception they find,
Good taste, and good sense, and good breeding conjoin'd.
Sweet Constance's manners were gentle and mild,
And the Lares of Blagdon benignantly smil'd.
They march'd to the study in decent procession,
And were menac'd by Francis with oral confession.
There *Religious Retirement*[2] resources can find,
Where the highest *Enlargement*[2] is that *of the Mind*[2];
In the garden sweet *Flora*[2] her *Fables*[2] display'd,

[1] Mrs. Langhorne's pew was surrounded with wooden bars.
[2] Titles of Dr. Langhorne's Works.

And *Conjugal Happiness*[1] gladden'd the shade;
Though Venus, deserted, in tears and alone is,
And sighs and laments for the *death of Adonis*[1],
To her grief and her passion she gives a full scope
In the *Visions* of *Fancy*[1], or *Hymns* of sweet *Hope*.[1]
No wonder the *Veil* should its *Origin*[1] claim
From the nunnery of Constance, so sacred to fame.
The dinner succeeded; enough to beguile
Saint Antony's anger, Apicius's smile.
Nay, Darteneuf's self, that voluptuous old glutton,
Might have relish'd the wine, and applauded the mutton.
Not Castaly's fountain could rival the ale;
But 'twas Francis's spirit that crowned the regale.

* * * * *
* * * * *

"'Tis wanting what should follow."
Congreve.

HANNAH.

V.

Mrs. More's Opinion on the Necessity of Religion in Education, and the Importance of committing Education to the Hands of the Clergy.

The whole chapter in the Moral Sketches, intituled "England's best Hope," is very explicit on this point. The following extracts comprise its essence:

"Gentlemen should be scholars; liberal learning need not interfere with religious acquirements, unless it be so conducted as to leave no time for its cultivation, unless it cause them to consider religion as an

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[1] Titles of Dr. Langhorne's works.

object of inferior regard. *But no human learning ought to keep religious instruction in the background, so as to render it an incidental, a subordinate part, in the education of a Christian gentleman.*"

"*Religious education, with God's blessing upon it, which every truly Christian father will not fail to invoke, is all in all towards the restoration, the elevation, the preservation of our national character.* And let it never be forgotten, that it is the education of the rich which must finally determine the fate, at once, of rich and poor; and, by consequence, which must determine the destiny of our country.

"Here then is Britain's last best hope; and when we consider the unparalleled advantages we possess in a learned and orthodox clergy, who instruct us in the sanctuary, and who preside over our publick and private seminaries, why need we despair? Why need we doubt that the Christian religion, grafted on the substantial stock of the genuine British character, and watered by the dews of heaven, may bring forth the noblest productions of which this lower world is capable; though neither the security nor the triumph will be complete till these 'trees of righteousness' are transplanted into the paradise of God?"

To much the same purpose Mrs. More speaks in the Essay on St. Paul, chap. viii. (Works, vol. x. p. 137.) "It is recorded by St. Luke of this polished and highly intellectual city [Athens], that it was *wholly given up to idolatry;* a confirmation of the remark of Pausanias, that there were more image-worshippers in Athens than in all Greece besides.

"We have here a clear proof that the reasonableness of Christianity was no recommendation to its adoption by those people who, of all others, were acknowledged to have cultivated reason the most

highly. What a melancholy and heart-humbling conviction! that wit and learning, in their loftiest elevation, open no natural avenue to the heart of man! that the grossest ignorance leaves it not more inaccessible to Divine truth! St. Paul never appears to have made so few proselytes in any place as at Athens."

Tolerant as was Mrs. More, she plainly saw through the artifice of "Bible Schools," in which no religion was to be taught, but the Bible put, without explanation, into the hands of children. Such a plan might be eligible in Ireland, where, otherwise, a great part of the population would have no chance of knowing that such a book existed; but in England, possessing the fullest means of imparting a true scriptural education, such a scheme could only have the effect of affording, at best, a very imperfect kind of religious instruction, while the name of the Bible was artfully put forward to obviate the opposition of a Christian community to an unchristian education. Mrs. More's opinion of this system is thus given in a letter to Mr. Wilberforce: "The boasted *liberality* on which they value themselves in the conduct of the Bristol schools, is *that relaxing toleration* which enables them to *combine Quakers and Presbyterians, 'the sprinkled and the dipped,'* by insisting on no peculiar form of worship or religious instruction; so that I fear, in this accommodating and comprehensive plan, *Christianity slips through their fingers.* I hope and believe they inculcate industry, but I never went to see them myself, because I think *they are carried on in a way I could not commend,* and which it might not be right to censure. The manager is a man who will torment you to death, if you give him the entrée. He is as vain as Erskine in another way, absurd and injudicious, and as fond of fame as Alexander. With all this, he

is sober, temperate, laborious, charitable; but *one with whom* I NEVER, *and you never*, COULD COALESCE, *with views and motives* SO DISSIMILAR."

VI.

Extracts from Mrs. More's Instructions to the Children of the Blagdon School.

"The last thing I shall call your attention to, is the observance of the Sabbath day; and however 'the fool, who hath said in his heart there is no God,' may pollute and profane it, pray do you observe it as a day holy unto the Lord. How particularly solemn is the fourth commandment!—'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.'—That is, at your peril be the neglect of this day! Therefore, when you hear the morning bell sound forth, consider it as speaking aloud to the whole parish, 'O be joyful in the Lord, all ye people! serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song! O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise!' Take up then your prayerbook, and read over carefully the psalms of the day, that you may commit no mistake in your responses at church. This done, you may walk in the garden, and observe the flowers or productions of the season; a thousand things will awake in your mind edifying thoughts, if you attend to them.

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The bell tolls. Take with you as many brothers and sisters, if you have any, as are of years of discretion to behave decent. Proceed slow and grave towards the church, and think thus: 'I am now going to pay my publick devotion to the great God; let me consider the dignity of the Creator, lest I offer the oblation

of sinners, which is an abomination unto the Lord, rather than the prayer of the upright, which is his delight.' 'Keep,' therefore, not only 'thy foot,' but thy heart also, 'when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools, who consider not that they do evil.'

"As you enter the church-yard, you may say to yourself, 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord. Grant, O Lord, that I may die the death of the righteous, and that my latter end may be like his.' Don't stay long loitering about the church-yard, (as is too much the custom,) but proceed directly into the church. Kneel down and say lowly, 'Lord be merciful unto me a sinner; cleanse my soul from the contamination of sin, and grant, good Lord, that the words which I hear this day with my outward ears, may be so grafted in my heart, that they may bring forth the fruit of holiness in my life."

"When the prayers begin, observe what is printed in small letters above every portion of the service. It is called the rubrick, which means red, because it was formerly, for distinction's sake, printed in red letters. You will find here every direction necessary for your instruction, in respect to attitude and responding. As for instance, over the sentences which begin the service, you read, 'The minister shall read one or more of these sentences.' That is, the minister *only* shall read; the congregation are to hearken. This continues to the general confession, over which you find, 'To be said of the whole congregation, after the minister, all kneeling.' For want of noticing these directions, we sometimes see people rise up, when they should continue kneeling, and continue kneeling when they should stand up; thus perverting the beauty of the service into unseemly disorder. When it is your

part to make answer, do it distinctly, and with a solemn tone of voice. While the minister is reading the lessons, or any part of the Litany in which you are not required to respond, look up stedfastly at him, and consider the weight and value of the words he delivers. Service being ended, return home directly, and read the Scriptures, or walk in the garden, till your meat is prepared. Partake of it with innocent cheerfulness, and put on your best behaviour; this will be a heart-felt comfort to your parents, and a very pleasing and instructive lesson to the little ones of the family. After evening service and catechizing are over, you may amuse yourself till bed-time in walking about home, or with your parents or friends, conversing freely with them, asking questions of such things as you observe, but cannot well understand; this will give you an insight into matters, and will both please and profit. When you retire to rest, kneel before you undress yourself at your bedside, and offer this prayer:—"Receive, O my God, the humble gratitude of thy creature, for the numerous blessings and mercies of the day past. Extend thy accustomed goodness this night, O merciful Creator, unto all my relations and benefactors, and unto me also, O my Father. Guard our slumbers; let no evil thoughts pollute our souls, nor accident approach to hurt our bodies, but bring us in health, happiness, and prosperity to the beginning of the next day, and grant that we may all be truly thankful for it. But if I awake no more in this world, receive my soul, O God, into thy everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose words I conclude my prayers. 'Our Father,' &c.

"This, my dear little friends, is the pleasant, rational, and comfortable life of a Christian, who lives in the fear of God, and dies in the Lord. 'As for the wicked,

it is not so with them, but they are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt; there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.' "

VII.

Specimen of Mrs. More's Ballads in 1817.

An Address to the Meeting in Spa Fields.

What follies, what falsehoods were uttered in vain
To disturb our repose by that Jacobin Paine ! [1]
Shall Britons, that traitor who scorned to obey,
Of Cobbett and Hunt now become the vile prey ?

The knaves think to cheat you in friendship's disguise,
For all they have told you they know to be lies ;
They mean not to serve you ; you are but their tools ;
How dare they cajole you as if you were fools ?

They'd make you their dupes, on your shoulders they'd ride,
And when they have used you, they'd kick you aside :
Then shun these deceivers, to England be true,
And care not for miscreants who care not for you.

Now hear a kind friend, and I'll tell you a story,
How poor faithful Britons may rise to true glory ;
For you'll ne'er mend your fortunes, nor help the just cause,
By breaking of windows, or breaking of laws.

That "England expects you should all do your duty,"
Is a phrase, I am sure, that cannot be new t' ye ;
But can you your hero so sadly affront,
To confound the great Nelson with Cobbett and Hunt ?

[1] The two first lines are also the beginning of "Will Chip's True Rights of Man."

Shall men who once conquered at famed Trafalgar
Begin at Spa Fields to wage civil war?
Shall the glory of Englishmen ever be stained?
Shall Spa Fields thus lose all that Waterloo gained?

They assert that "misfortune no further can go,"
They forget that a prison is still greater wo:
They tell you "the climax of misery is gained;"
They forgot to inform you a gibbet remained.

Thus to prisons and gibbets these traitors would bring
The Briton who now loves his country and King.
Then cheer up, my lads, be patient awhile,
Abhor these deceivers, who stab while they smile.

The rich meet together your wants to redress;
They pity your sorrows, they mourn your distress;
They deny themselves daily of all they can spare;
Their poor honest neighbours shall soon have a share.

Employment they'll give to the able and strong,
And nourishing food to the helpless and young;
And He who the multitude graciously fed
Will not long from His servants withhold daily bread.

FINIS.

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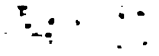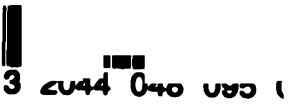
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